



Beckwith del.

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M^r BLAND as MARY ANN.

M A — *So you be come I see.*

London, Printed for G. Cawthorn, British Library, Strand Jan 21 1797.



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THE

SCHOOL FOR GUARDIANS.

A

COMEDY.

By ARTHUR MURPHY, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR, AND UNDER THE DIRECTION OF,
GEORGE CAWTHORN, BRITISH LIBRARY, STRAND.

1797.

SCOTT'S FOR CHAMPIONS

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PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MISS ELLIOT.

MAY I intrude upon your patience for a minute?
Ladies and gentlemen, before the opening of the play,
Just to excuse an accident; which, I hope, has no mischief
in it.

I fain, if you'll permit, a word or two would say,
I hope you'll not be angry; but we've got no rologue for
to-night;

And so I thought it was best to come and tell ye all the truth
downright.

I went to Mr. Poet, and I spoke to him all I could;
But he said he had not leisure, though I know 'tis in his
power, if he would.

"A prologue, ma'am," says he!—"Yes, Sir, a prologue, if
you please."

And then I did so intreat the man, and beg, and pray, and
tease:

I told him, "You know, Sir, what a miserable plight we
all are in,

To frown upon the performers, when pit, box, and gallery
begin;

Whu—go the catcalls—dub—dub—dub—each dreadful cri-
tic's stick—

Prölog'—throw him over—won't ye ha' some
orange chips—Prölôgue—Cries o' London—Music!"

*All this and more I said; but he, determin'd still,
In formal fustian thus declar'd his will:*

*"Oft have I tried" [seems puzzled]---something about
his style,*

And how he felt the town's indulgent smile.

"Were I again to try my scanty vein,

I'd beg protection for the feeble strain.

But then to sue—he paus'd and rubb'd his head—

To sue—when fam'd Moliere the stage doth tread,

Were to profane the manes of the dead.

Moliere, of old, and still with rapture seen,

Was legislator of the comic scene.

To bid his Simple Girl assert the stage,

And, if she pleases, strive to mend the age:

This was my motive—this my only aim;

Heedless of gain!—no candidate for fame?

An audience will weigh all in equal scales,

For justice, and not party, there prevails."

*Thus spoke Mr. Poet, and then with long steps march'd
away;*

*And now I am left alone to apologize for offering you this
night's play.*

We'll strive to make you laugh, if our aim be not perverted;

*Pray, how d'ye find yourselves?—Are ye in good humour,
and willing to be diverted?*

If you approve,

The Rosciad Scribbler then no more I'll dread,

Who points his malice at a woman's head!

Who drop by drop his venom doth distil,

While Mother Dullness guides the hireling's quill.

*Lull'd in her lap, strange wonders he describes,
And Terence seems—a Frenchman to his eyes !
From thence he issues foul decrees on plays;
Adorns with scandal, and lampoons with praise.
One smile from you defeats the sland'rer's aim ;
His calumny, like your applause, is fame.
From your applause our mimic glories rise ;
In pleasing you my whole ambition lies.*

Dramatis Personæ.

Men.

SIR THEODORE BRUMPTON,	- - - -	Mr. Walker.
YOUNG BRUMPTON,	- - - - -	Mr. Woodward.
BELFORD,	- - - - -	Mr. Smith.
OLDCASTLE,	- - - - -	Mr. Shuter.
LOVIBOND,	- - - - -	Mr. Dunstall.
BRISK,	- - - - -	Mr. Dyer.
PETER,	- - - - -	Mr. Morgan.

Women.

MARY ANN,	- - - - -	Miss Elliot.
HARRIET,	- - - - -	Miss Wilford.
BRIDGET,	- - - - -	Mrs. Mahon.

Scene, London.



THE
SCHOOL FOR GUARDIANS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Sir THEODORE and BRUMPTON.

Sir Theodore.

BUT I won't be told; I won't reason about it; I won't be answer'd; I won't hear a word.

Brump. I have done, Sir:—you have proved it to demonstration, by the same sort of logic that was used by one of the wits of Charles the II^d's time to his dog, when he was too lazy to beat him—"I wish you well married, and settled in the country."

Sir Theo. There again now! don't enrage me; I have some whimsical humours about me, that let me tell you, Sir—and I can be very peremptory, if I please.—What! when my neighbour Strickland and I have agreed the matter! A young lady, with a fair fortune in hand, and seven hundred a year in expectancy—as

pretty a reversion as any in Hampshire!—and am I now to be told, “She does not suit my taste—she is not handsome?” And so I am to be wasting my breath with you, about a complexion, a nose, and a lip!

Brump. If you would but leave those matters to me, Sir——

Sir Theo. But I tell you no; I won't leave those matters to you——Beauty is the last thing I desire to see in my family. Your mother, peace be to her! was as ugly a woman as you shall see in a summer's day: and what do you think I married her for?—For your good, Sir—for the good of my children.

Brump. And pray, Sir, which of ye does this side-box face of mine take after?

Sir Theo. You shall take nothing after me, that you may depend upon, unless you prove obedient to my will and pleasure. I'll not leave you a foot of land.

Brump. I hope you'll live to enjoy it yourself, Sir—

Sir Theo. I'll give my fortune to found a new college, where it is not wanted——

Brump. I hope you'll live to enjoy it yourself, Sir.

Sir Theo. I'll cut you off with a shilling to buy you an halter.

Brump. I hope you'll live to enjoy it yourself, Sir.

Sir Theo. I hope I shall, though you say it with a sort of a dry look between jest and earnest. But don't talk to me of beauty again; I never knew any good come of it: beauty is like fine fruit, only fit to draw a parcel of flies about it.

Brump. And so I must set my teeth on edge with crab-tree apples—But where would be the harm, Sir, if, purely for the good of my family, I were to marry a lady of some share of beauty, only just to cross the strain a little, and settle a shape and a feature upon the issue of our marriage?

Sir Theo. Settle your wife's fortune upon 'em—Look ye, Sir;—my purse strings will never open: not a shilling of my money shall you touch, till you pay your respects to Miss Strickland. Now you know my resolution. What a graceless look there is!—ruin yourself if you will—follow your own courses, Sir.

[Exit.

Brump. Your most obedient very humble servant, Sir—you may depend that I shall chuse for myself. —Brisk! why don't you answer, sirrah! Why, Brisk!—

Enter BRISK.

Brump. We have been pretty handsomely lectured here this morning, Brisk!

Brisk. Yes, Sir, we have had wherewithal to edify by. I suppose, we shall lie at Tom Tilbury's, at Bagshot, to-night, Sir—

Brump. Where?

Brisk. Tom Tilbury's, Sir—only just to break the neck of our journey, for I suppose, now, you'll drop all thoughts of this other lady—I forget her name—Ay, Miss Mary Ann Richley—she has no chance now, I reckon, Sir—

Brump. Why, you senseless numskull!—as sure as I am Charles Brumpton, Esq. she shall be Mrs. Brumpton; and upon the death of my very good father, she'll be a baronet's lady, that's all.

Brisk. And yet there is some truth in what Sir Theodore says: beauty is but a frail perishable sort of a commodity; and if you are disinherited for it, the lady's charms will not pay your poor servant, Brisk, his board-wages. A feature, or a smile, can't go to market: a pawnbroker will lend nothing upon the tip of an ear: though indeed she may mortgage her person; but that, I take it, will be for her own advantage: we shall get nothing but a comely pair of horns by it, Sir, with submission.

Brump. Why you talk a frothy kind of nothing at a tolerable rate, Brisk.

Brisk. I have shewn you one side of the medal; now behold the reverse, Sir: When you marry an ugly woman, there is no great pleasure in beholding her; and to be sure, when you look at her, you'll be apt to murmur to yourself—for all purposes of joy one may cut as desirable an object out of an old tapestry hanging: but then the woman has some valuable parchments, such as leases, bonds, and mortgages: and I, Sir, shall live in tolerable plight with you, which, to so good a master——

Brump. Leave prating, sirrah, and do as I ordered you. Put on your farmer's dress; go directly to the object I adore; let her know you are come from her guardian in the country, and have his orders to take

her home under your care; convey her safe to my arms, and I shall reward you.

Brisk. But, Sir——

Brump. No arguing with me: about it, straight.

Brisk. You know how many blanketings and blows I have suffered in your service, Sir——

Brump. Sirrah, no words! Go and see who's at the door.

Brisk. You have marred many an excellent plot of mine, Sir. You know you cannot help meddling, when I undertake a scheme. If you'll promise me, Sir, not to——

Brump. Will you see who's at the door?

Brisk. I am gone, Sir.

[*Exit.*]

Brump. Ha! ha!—I shall most certainly carry her off. How Sir Theodore will be astonished, when he finds she is an heiress. Ha! ha!—it is the pleasantest adventure——

Enter BELFORD.

Bel. Brumpton, good morrow!—always in spirits, I see.

Brump. My dear Belford, nothing depresses my spirits—though you thought they were too high last night, and were for letting me a little blood. Death man! you make nothing of displaying an ell of sword-blade in defence of your mistress's top-knot.

Bel. Why you know I love too tenderly to bear the test of raillery: it is the infirmity of my temper; why would you put me to it

Brump. And you that know my turn of mind, why would you be angry with me? I am happily a follower of the laughing philosopher.

Bel. Po! prithee, man, don't be such a coxcomb.

Brump. Prithee, don't you be so morose, so sour, so discontented a spirit. But, if in your phrase, I am a coxcomb, with all my heart, I faith: but take this along with you—what you mean as a term of reproach, I receive as a compliment to the materials nature has been pleased to compound in this happy frame of mine.

Bel. Po! po! running on at the old rate! If self-applause be philosophy, you have a comfortable share.

Brump. I have, Sir; and while my happiness is preserved by it, keep you the gravity and good sense, that make you too refined to be pleased, too wise to be merry, and too knowing to be contented. I am in a fair way to be successful, without any trouble at all; you are likely to be most scurvily disappointed, after a world of pains. An humble bow, which my dancing-master taught me, while I laughed at him; a fashionable coat, for which, if my taylor is ever paid, he will laugh at me; an intriguing snuff-box, and an apt valet de chambre—all these make love for me, and—

Bel. And you assume the merit of the conquest!

Brump. Oh! yes, when the trouble is over, I take the reward. Did you ever know a general officer, who, when the horse and the foot, and the right and left wing, have carried the day for him, did not claim to himself both the honour and the booty? But you make a toil of a pleasure. Love, which to me is a

scene of delight, to you is a drudgery. Your temper grows as sour as a prude's, when the sermon is long; and as hot as a Welshman's, if you laugh at his pedigree; or a profess'd sharper's, if you doubt his honour, after he has cogg'd the dice, and picked your pocket of your money.

Bel. Why I own I am piqued, and naturally. If any friend of mine, out of mere spleen, speak detractingly of the person I admire, it were base infidelity in love not to defend her, when she is disparaged—my every thought is dedicated to her. Absent, I see her, hear her, and my imagination gloats for ever on her charms!

Brump. And you are so easily alarmed, that little difficulties are the Alps and Pyreneans in your way. Now my faith in these matters removes mountains. But indeed in all things we are opposite characters. If a tradesman brings you in a bill, and presses for payment, "Sdeath! does the scoundrel doubt my honour? does he mean to affront me?" Now I, when my father suffered me to be arrested, went cheerfully into confinement, and diverted myself for three weeks together with the bum-bailiff's character. In the business of our softer passions, the same humour pursues us. You write studied letters to your Dulcinea; I am written to. You sigh; I sing. You fret; I am gay. You, upon a disappointment, "Furies, death, and rage—there is no enduring this—life is grown a burden—damnation!" I burst into a laugh, and what a whimsical world we live in—ha! ha! But

come, I will hear your melancholy story. Well, the old dragon, I suppose, watches the Hesperian fruit.

Bel. He does, Sir: he keeps her locked up as a miser does his gold—not to be made use of till his death, and then to fall into hands that won't know the value of it. It's love's last shift with me. She is inaccessible, and her guardian, old Lovibond, proposes to marry her himself.

Brump. And so, like the tyrant of old, intends to tack a living and dead body together.

Bel. Even so. My dear Brumpton, there should be an act of Parliament to hinder these old fellows from stopping the propagation of the species.

Brump. You are too hard upon 'em—they are seldom guilty of that mischief. I have known 'em have twins at a birth; that is, when some such coxcomb as myself gives them a helping hand; and then the old fellow cocks his hat upon it, and totters about so vigorously, wondering how the babes resemble him in every particular; whilst the mother knows, that she followed the example of the Grecian painter, and took a feature from every one of her acquaintance. If he prevents your marrying her, take your revenge that way.

Bel. Profanation! Her virtue, Sir! Besides, the world could never repair the loss. Her heart, I am sure, is mine. I used to visit there: but now no admittance. An evidence on the crown side, in a messenger's hands, is not better secured.

Brump. Now my business goes on without any trou-

ble or difficulty. My old dragon is in the country, and has left his fair ward, the sweetest girl, my dear Belford——

Bel. You described her yesterday but few removes from a downright idiot.

Brump. Pardon me: she is simple indeed. But such a simplicity! It just serves to shew that injustice has been done her in her education; but in her every turn she gives such tokens of sensibility! She has beauty without knowing it; certain wild graces, rather than accomplishments; and talents, instead of sense!

Bel. Po! po!—a mere rustic beauty!

Brump. There now, derogating from her merit, and yet I am calm! The truth is, she has been brought up in the country, and wickedly kept in ignorance, that she might fall an easy prey to her guardian. But I have raised a spirit in her.

Bel. And how the devil did you gain access to her?

Brump. I was going to tell you. Old Nestor's out of town, and has left her in the care of the two veriest simpletons that ever whistled for want of thought at a country fair. But gold, Sir, gold, that speaks all languages, and adapts itself to all capacities, has pleaded most eloquently for me. But come, I positively must leave you.

Bel. Nay, if it must be so——

Brump. My dear Belford, Cupid direct your arrows.

I see her every day, and all the day,

And every day is still but as the first,

So eager am I still to see her more. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

A street. Enter LOVIBOND and OLDCASTLE.

Lovi. And but this moment returned, Mr. Oldcastle?

Old. Just this moment stepped out of the machine.

Lovi. Well! and now I suppose you have prudently laid aside all thoughts of matrimony.

Old. Ha! you are a comical man, brother Lovibond. I have taken my measures. To-morrow makes me a bridegroom; and my fair ward, Miss Mary Ann, a bride.

Lovi. And a little time will make you——

Old. Happy: though, by that significant look, you have your doubts.

Lovi. I have, Sir: I have a shrewd guess that——

Old. Then you'll be out in your guess.

Lovi. I wish your horns a'n't out first.

Old. Well said, and without any apprehension for yourself. You are still determined to marry Mary Ann's sister Harriet, I suppose.

Lovi. That's quite another business; what I do, is no rule for your actions.

Old. It is as I ever said: each man is still looking at the hump upon his neighbour's back, but never thinks of casting an eye over his own shoulder. I warrant me now you, in your grand climacteric, will tell me I am old.

Lovi. Full ten years before me in the race of life.

Besides, you are an old batchelor, a stranger to the ways of wedlock. I am enured to the service. Your sister, Mr. Oldcastle, could have told you what a desperate good husband I was. But, lack a day! you begin late. Mercy on your forehead, say I! mercy on your forehead!

Old. Ha! ha! how blind some people are when they have taken a thing in their heads! Ha! ha!

Lowi. Well! well! laugh on. But you that have been for ever a censor of your neighbours, for ever sneering and jibing at the married life——

Old. And a pleasant topic it is! Why matrimony affords a little comedy in every family one knows. But the education I have given Mary Ann——

Lowi. Is the worst in the world.

Old. The very best! I have trained her up in plain simplicity. Woman's wit teems with contrivances to disgrace her husband; yet you would educate Harriet in this profligate town!

Lowi. Ay, and I have taught her to know right from wrong.

Old. Right from wrong! You have ruined the girl. Have not you indulged her in every whimsy this fertile town affords?

Lowi. I have shewn her the world.

Old. Have not you carried her to plays?

Lowi. To see folly ridiculed.

Old. To profligate comedies?

Lowi. The stage is the school of virtue.

Old. The school of sin and impudence!

Levi. Where vice undergoes the lash of satire——

Old. Where vice is made alluring, provoking!

Levi. Where young ladies may learn——

Old. The use of dark closets, back-stairs, and ladders of rope!

Levi. Where they may learn to put on the veil of modesty.

Old. To put on the breeches, and escape from their guardians!

Levi. Where they are taught to respect grey-headed authority!

Old. To make a cuckold of authority! I know the ways of 'em all! Their cards, routs, operas, Soho-assemblies—all contrivances to excite curiosity, kindle desire, prompt inclination, and send 'em all dancing a jig to destruction.

Levi. Common-place invective! Harriet will know how to avoid——

Old. She will know how to deceive you.

Levi. She will have too much honour.

Old. She will have too much wit. Now Mary Ann has no wild notions, and of course no dangerous curiosity.

Levi. Her curiosity is to come. She'll fall a prey to the first powder'd coxcomb that bows to her.

Old. Her simplicity will preserve her.

Levi. But when the serpents of this town begin to whisper in her ear——

Old. They'll have no opportunity. She is snug in a little box of an house, which I have taken in the name of

Mr. Biddulph. I have another lodging in my own name, where I do business. Nobody will see her; and when the nine day's wonder is over, I shall pack off to the country, and so escape from impertinence.

Lovi. Well! well! I can't but laugh at your system of education! ha! ha! Marry her if you will; and then, on account of your age and infirmities, you may do the business of your office by deputy—Ha! ha! a plan of simplicity!

Old. Brother Lovibond, a good day to you: I wish you success—Ha! ha! a town-education for a young girl! [Exit.

LOVIBOND *alone*.

Ha! ha! poor man tottering to bed to a young wife! I'll go home to my own Harriet.

Enter BELFORD.

Bel. 'Sdeath and confusion! my dull brain can devise nothing—hey! is not that old Argus Centoculi with all his eyes out!—Mr. Lovibond—a sight of you—what, have you been out of town?

Lovi. No, the builders are carrying the town out of town I think, and so, a body need not move out of London for country air——

Bel. How charmingly you look!

Lovi. What you call a green old age: I am not like the young rakes about this town, who decay in their prime, and are fourscore at five and twenty.

Bel. Ay! you have lived upon the interest of your

constitution, and have not out-run the principal. I have had the honour of knocking at your door several times——

Lovi. [*Aside.*] I know it——

Bel. But no body at home.

Lovi. [*Aside.*] I know that too.

Bel. I want to lose a little more money to you at back-gammon.

Lovi. I have left it off.

Bel. Well! well! I'll come and eat a bit of mutton with you. How stand you for to-day?

Lovi. What an hurry he is in? [*Aside.*] I have an unlucky engagement——

Bel. Well! I'll take a morsel of supper.

Lovi. Well pushed! [*Aside.*] I have left off suppers.

Bel. So best: I'll be with you at breakfast in the morning.

Lovi. I have taken to breakfasting at the coffee-house. One meets with very sensible people at the coffee-house, and hears men praised for being out of place, and abused for being in place; and a huge deal of news, that's very entertaining in the morning; and all a damned lie in the evening. Your servant.

B. l. But the fair Miss Harriet—how does she do?

Lovi. There he has touched the right string at last. [*Aside.*] I'll let her know how kind you are.

[*Going.*]

Bel. Nay, don't fly so soon: I am to give you joy,

I hear: you are to make Miss Harriet happy, I understand.

Lowi. Oh! no; they talk at random.

Bel. Yes, yes; come, you have taught her all her accomplishments, and are now to teach her the art of love—ha! ha! Mr. Lovibond.

Lowi. I profess no such thing. [Going.

Bel. Yes, yes, come—shall I dance at your wedding? You'll trust her with me in a country dance, and see that lovely bosom heave in sweet disorder, and rise as if it wooed your hand to touch it, ere it falls again.

Lowi. Ha! ha! you talk loosely.

Bel. Then when music wakens every gentler passion, and the sprightly romping has called forth all her bloom; then you'll lead her off, consenting, trembling, doubting, blushing.

Lowi. Ha! ha! ha!

Bel. Ha! ha!—come, I'll go and dine with you—
“The world must be peopled, you know”—Ha! ha! ha!

[Exeunt together, laughing.]

Enter OLDCASTLE.

Old. Well! well! let him be obstinate, if he will: I must step, and see how Mary Ann has fared these ten days, since I have been in the country. Let me see, what's o'clock?—

Enter BRUMPTON.

Brump. How her old gaoler will look when he returns to town, and finds she has broke prison! I shall

be deemed the very Machiavel of intrigue! Hey! is not that Mr. Oldcastle?

Old. Mr. Brumpton!—I rejoice to see you.

Brump. My dear friend, you are come in the very crisis of my fate, in that dear ecstatic moment, when to the natural vivacity of a gay, giddy temper like mine, ten thousand circumstances conspire to lift me to the upper regions of delight, which, together with the felicity of encountering the only man in the world, that—I must take breath—I am faint with bliss—it is too much.

Old. Ay! your fever is pretty high, I see—recover your senses a little, and tell me at your leisure what is this mighty business.

Brump. Oh! business of such a nature—the Gods are now in council upon it—I expect Mercury every moment in the shape of my man Brisk, to let me know that the nectared sweets that dwell upon the lips of a certain lady are intended for a wild unthinking coxcomb, as the world is pleased to call me.

Old. To be sure—you are in request among the ladies, no doubt. Now will he lie like an attorney's clerk. [*Aside.*] You are going to help some worthy gentleman to an heir to his estate, I warrant me.

Brump. I have done some service in that way; but the truth is, I am now going to help my father to a grandson.

Old. Going to be married!

Brump. This day may perhaps crown my joys! some certain fumblers at this end of the town, who

were a little alarmed at the proportions of this leg, intend to light their windows upon it; the court of aldermen are preparing all demonstrations of joy; and their unhappy wives are going into deep mourning upon the occasion!

Old. The same confident fop he ever was! Well, and my friend Sir Theodore, what says he to all this?

Brump. You know his way; the same old crabbed humour—he has made a match for me elsewhere with one that—I would not deny the lady her merit—she preserves pickles well, and is a very notable keeper of accounts. The woman will do very well of a long winter's evening to say, Bless you when you sneeze—but—

Old. She has a fortune, I presume —

Brump. Does not want acres.

Old. And you prefer one without any?

Brump. You mistake me! she's an heiress; it is not clear that she is of age; but as soon as she comes to years of discretion—

Old. Then she may play the fool as fast as she will—

Brump. By chusing me, you think, she will give a specimen of her folly.—Ha! ha! I have pass'd many hours with her of late; she is beautiful as an angel—Now, my dear Sir, you can do me the most essential service—you have great influence over Sir Theodore; I dare not break this matter to him myself, but a word from you—

Old. And has she really an estate?

Brump. A very fine one;—a large number of acres and a coal-pit upon one of the manors.

Old. I profess I like your taste—ha! ha! The coal-pit whitens her skin, and she may hereafter wear a few of her own acres in each ear. I will see my old friend about this, and will positively promote your welfare. He shall agree to it, and——But how did you bring this about, pray?

Brump. An old way that I have—I came, saw, and conquered—I saw her at her window—such blooming sweetness! her eyes were through my heart at once—love inspired me with due courage.

Old. That was right—a bold stroke for a wife.

Brump. I drank tea with her the very next evening. I must indeed admit, that her understanding is not the most accomplished.

Old. So best—never marry a wit.

Brump. She is at present rather in a state of ignorance; but from those blue eyes she occasionally darts such glances, as bespeak a mind susceptible of the highest refinement.

Old. Where does she live?

Brump. In the very next street.

Old. What that street there?

Brump. Yes, that—under the care of the verriest muck-worm.

Old. He means me, I fear [*Aside.*] and her name, pray?

Brump. Miss Mary Ann Richley.

Old. Wounds! what a discovery here is! [*Aside.*]

Brump. Her guardian's name is Biddulph—perhaps you may know him.

Old. No, not I—the young rake-hell! [*Aside.*]

Brump. He means to abuse his trust, and confine youth and beauty within the arms of age and ugliness.—There's an old rogue for you!—Does not he deserve to be hanged?

Old. What a young villain! [*Aside.*]

Brump. I beg your pardon—I did not hear.

Old. I am seized with an ugly fit of coughing—
[*Coughs.*] But you should consider—the marriage-act is very strict, and requires the consent of prudent people.

Brump. Po! that's nothing—abuse Scotland as they will, it enables us to evade the laws of England. My dear Mr. Oldcastle, you have promised me you'll speak to my father.

Old. Ay! I'll keep my word—he shall certainly know how you are going on—I'll do you that good turn, you may depend.

Brump. My dear good friend, it is so lucky that I met with you—

Old. I am heartily glad I met you, indeed!

Brump. Well now, adieu! Oh! but I forgot to tell you—she'll be mine this very day. Brisk, my fellow, who is a footman of talents, is to go to her as a tenant from the country, come to town with old Biddulph's commands to carry her down with him in the fly. She is so simple she will believe it, and

the oafs about her will bite like gudgeons—and so—ha! ha!—I kindle into rapture!—I must fly to know the unhappy tidings—and so fare ye well—you'll speak to my father.

Old. I'll do for you there.

Brump. A million of thanks to you—Ha! ha! Is not this a charming adventure?—Ha! ha!—Did you ever know so happy a rogue? [Exit,

Old. [Alone.] I never knew so abandoned a young profligate, nor so damned an adventure!—If the fellow is lurking about my doors, I'll swear a robbery against him—If I get sight of him, I'll describe him, from head to foot; and swear he stole a horse in Northamptonshire—I have not a moment to lose,—and then, my young madam, bag and baggage away into the country.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter BRUMPTON.

Ho! ho! ye powers of laughter, you will shake me to pieces one day or other!—Poor Brisk!—What a jade's trick madam Fortune has play'd him!—He writes me here—[*Going to read.*] All the poor devil's ill stars must have been combined against him!

Enter BELFORD.

Bel. Yes, all my ill stars are combined, sure enough! Oh! Brumpton! I have seen her guardian, that su-

annuated iniquity! but he defeats my happiness, and crosses all my schemes.

Brump. You were admirably employed, my dear Belford—Ha! ha!—"Cato's a proper person to entrust a love-tale with!"

Bel. Your mirth is unseasonable, Sir——

Brump. Nay, if you will run about like a great boy to catch old birds with chaff, when you ought to seize the young unfledged one in its nest; why the consequence will be, that, like a great blubbering boy, you'll come back with your finger in your eye, "I don't know what to do—I can't catch it—I can't——"

Bel. 'Sdeath! insulted thus!—draw, Sir——

Brump. Not I; truly—I am otherwise disposed.

Bel. Defend yourself, or I'll dispose of you.

Brump. Well! kill me, if you will—I'll die laughing like Pierre in the tragedy.

Bel. Po! your meanness and your folly make you unworthy of my sword.

Brump. Ay! that's right—and now in due form, what has provoked you?

Bel. 'Sdeath! Sir, because your affairs are in a tolerable train, am I to be made your sport? Oh! you don't know what it is to be disappointed in the tenderest passion.

Brump. But I am disappointed, and in the tenderest passion too; and yet it was that very disappointment I was laughing at, and not my friend.

Bel. And are your purposes crossed too, my dear brother sufferer?

Brump. Ay! now I am unfortunate—Oh! the human mind!—Yes, Sir, I am disappointed—ha! ha!—Brisk is in a devil of a pickle! he went in disguise to carry off my little goddess for me—somebody that resembles him has committed a robbery in Northamptonshire—they have charged Brisk, and he writes me here, that they have carried him before Mr. Carbuncle, the wine-merchant, who deals out bad law and adulterated port to all St. Anne's parish. Brisk will be chronicled in miserable elegy, clubbed by two poets upon a flock-bed in the Old Jewry;—the historians of Grub-street are already preparing "The Life and Conversation of Jeremy Brisk, who was born of honest parents"—Ha! ha! poor devil! I must go to his assistance. *[Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Justice's House. Enter MITTIMUS and SQUEEZUM.

Mit. Here, bring the prisoner this way—a great pity, master Squeezum, that Mr. Carbuncle is not at home: this fellow will be carried to another shop, I fear.

Squeez. No, no; that shan't be—I have found another justice to sit for him—a gentleman who has been in the commission many years—he was going by in his chariot, but I stopped him. Here, bring in the prisoner.

Enter BRISK, dressed as a country fellow.

Brisk. Nay, good christian people—gentlemen—neighbours—I never was in Northamptonshire in my life—I am a poor, harmless, innocent fellow—I always had a mortal aversion to a cart—I never saw one in my days but it was better than a sermon to me—

Enter Sir THEODORE, with a letter in his hand.

Sir Theo. Well! well! I am not fond of acting, but rather than justice should be at a stand—the fellow answers the description!—sirrah, what can you say for yourself?

Brisk. Hi! hi! what shall I say?—your humble servant, Sir.

Sir Theo. Free and familiar! mind what you say; this is a serious business.

Brisk. Dear heart, Sir, does not your honour know me?—your son's faithful and honest servant, Brisk.

Sir Theo. Brisk! what rogue's trick have you been playing, sirrah?

Brisk. Your honour knows, Sir, I have not been out of your house any time these six weeks past.

Sir Theo. And why in this disguise, sirrah?

Brisk. Nothing but a frolick, Sir: a mere freak of my young master's, Sir, and nothing more.

Sir Theo. Commit him for further examination. Rascal, I will know the whole: make out a warrant.

Brisk. Sir, Sir, I—you shall hear it all—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Sir Theo. Very well, and if you dare attempt to deceive—Clear the room, and leave us to ourselves. [*Exeunt all the rest.*] If you tell me a single falsehood—

Brisk. Not a tittle, Sir: the fact is, Sir, my master is in love desperately with a young lady from the country—he says she is an heiress, Sir, but I own I don't believe it—

Sir Theo. Go on.

Brisk. And, Sir, I was to go in this dress, and so to carry her off, and deliver her over to him—that's the short and the long of it, Sir, as I am a sinner.

Sir Theo. And as you value your ears, this is the truth?

Brisk. Oh! upon honour, Sir.

Sir Theo. Hark-ye, sirrah! you know the oak that stands near my house in the country.

Brisk. Perfectly well, Sir.

Sir Theo. It has been the reformer of manners twenty miles round the country.

Brisk. Ay! Sir, it has been felt with a vengeance.

Sir Theo. I have ordered a good cudgel to be lopped for me, and, if there is any deception in this, thy shoulders shall answer.

Brisk. Every word most religiously true, Sir.

Sir Theo. Very well!—may be so—it has an air—I am glad I have found this out—the prodigal! the blockhead! You may go home, Sir; I can take upon me to discharge you from the suspicion you stand under here.

Brisk. Yes, Sir—and I shall ever——

Sir Theo. And if I ever detect you in any more plottings—if you are again the confederate of that absurd blockhead——

Brisk. Transport me, Sir, if ever again. Well off, Brisk, well off!—— [Exit.

Sir Theo. So—so—I have found out the young graceless, have I? mighty well! and if I don't exert the authority of a father——

SCENE III.

Lovibond's House. Enter HARRIET.

Har. To be locked up in this manner with an old rogue of a guardian! Mr. Belford! Mr. Belford! why won't you be my deliverer? He knows I like him; I have told him so a thousand times; that is, my eyes have told him so: and yet he undertakes nothing! One would think the young men of this age have not hearts in their bosoms bigger than pin's heads! Ah! my dear protector! [Seeing Lovibond.

Enter LOVIBOND.

Lovi. My blossom! my lovely little ward! to-morrow makes you the queen of my heart; and your will shall be a law to me.

Har. You only flatter me; you won't let yourself be ruled by me.

Lovi. I shall live under your absolute command,

rose-bud ! But you must be mild in authority, for you know——

Har. Yes, I know how tender you have been : your confining me here for so many days is to me a proof of the tenderest love !

Loxi. Yes, it is a mark of my affection.

Har. There are many reasons why I should not venture abroad—more than you dream of.

Loxi. You alarm me—what reasons ?

Har. Why the danger is—no—you'll be for fighting the odious man.

Loxi. No ; I'll not fight, I'll live for you.

Har. But will you follow my advice, and speak to him calmly, without passion ?

Loxi. I will—let me hear—what's the matter ?

Har. Why, that Mr. Belford, whose visits you used to encourage——

Loxi. I have not liked him a good while—what of him ?

Har. Oh ! he's a wicked man : he has vile designs in his head, and would fain have me listen to his proposals.

Loxi. The impudence of the young men of this age !

Har. Your back is no sooner turned, than he raps at the door, and at the windows, and disgraces me with all the neighbours : my character will be ruined [*Pretends to cry.*] unless you find some method to——

Loxi. Don't be alarmed, my sweet—I'll bar my doors, and you shan't stir out this twelvemonth.

Har. That won't do.

Lowi. Then you shall never go out at all.

Har. That's some comfort: but in the mean time to have my reputation blasted by an abandoned libertine! [*She cries.*] "Cæsar's wife should not only be virtuous, but free from suspicion."

Lowi. The sensible girl! this is owing to her education. Her sister Mary Ann could not make such a remark.

Har. Well! well! you don't love me.

Lowi. Yes, but I do: I'll go and swear the peace against him.

Har. I wish you would.

Lowi. I'll do it directly—I'll let him know by a justice's warrant that Cæsar's wife is not to be trifled with.

Har. And pray tell him, I hate him: that he may come as often as he will under my window, but it will be to no purpose, for I shall not endeavour to let him in.

Lowi. He shall hear it.

Har. Let him know that though he is young and handsome, that all his charms are lost upon me.

Lowi. I'll do it,

Har. Tell him you have been a father to me—that I consider you still as my father; and that I think it unnatural to love giddy young men, when I can be so much better off with you.

Lowi. He shall hear it on every side of his ears.

Har. Ay, but without loss of time, if you love me—I shan't be easy till he knows my mind.

Loxi. Nor I—it is fit he should know your mind.

Har. Yes, and tell him, if he should come when you are out, not all his winning ways shall prevail on me to run away with him.

Loxi. You have charmed me! transported me! ravished me! Get up stairs—I'll seek him this moment—ha! ha!—this all springs from her good sense—this is knowing right from wrong—ha! ha! *[Exit.]*

Har. Be sure you tell him every word: and if Mr. Belford does but understand every word, as I intend it, then I may still wing my flight to his dear arms!—a new scheme this of mine!—but love inspired it, and love may crown it with success. *[Exit.]*

SCENE IV.

Oldcastle's House. Enter PETER and BRIDGET.

Peter. Yes, yes, Bridget—the gentleman's generous enow, for a matter o' that.

Brid. And pray, Peter, do the London folk always give money to the like of we, as often as they come in or out of the house?

Peter. Ay! zure, and the sarving folk call it vails. Why, Bridget, poor servants would not be able to ape all their master's follies, and powder like fine gentry, and curse and swear like lords, an so be every body did

not give at street door more than any thing they get in the house is worth.

Brid. La! well that's pure, sure enow!

Peter. As to me, do ye zee, I does not care how often the gentleman comes, and for matter o' that, I does not care how long master stays in the country.

Brid. These London ways are comical, that's fer sure. [*A rap at the door.*] More grise to the mill—go and open the door, Peter.

Peter. Go yourself, an you go to that.

Brid. I shall budge none, not I.

Peter. Nor I, faith and troth! [*Another rap.*]

Brid. La! how can you be so cross?—

Peter. You put all upon me, that's your way—who's at the door?

Old. [*Within.*] Open the door you varlets—open the door,

Brid. Oh! it's master—I'll go——

Peter. Master! then I'll go——

Brid. Stand out of the way, can't you?

Peter. Stand away yourself—I be ready—ben't I!

Brid. Farther a field, will you?

Old. [*Rapping.*] Within there, open the door, I say——

Brid. Call here to Peter—he won't let a body——

Peter. No body shall but I—[*Opens the door.*] Ser-
vant, master,

Enter OLDCASTLE.

Brid. Welcome home, master,

Old. Way am I to wait thus?

Brid. It was all his doings——

Peter. It was all her doings as well as I.

Old. Peace, numskulls! How is every body at home?

Peter. Charmingly well.

Brid. All in pure health, praise for every thing! and Miss Mary Ann sings about the house like a little bird in a cage.

Old. Has not she been melancholy since I went into the country?

Brid. No, Lord love her, not she.

Old. No! [*In a passion.*]

Brid. Yes!—how terrible he looks!

Old. Did not she long for my return?

Peter. Hugeously! so we did all.

Old. Vixen! jade! villain! rascal!

Peter. I'm down o'my knees.

Brid. So be I—merciful father, how——

Old. You have obeyed my orders, have you?
That scoundrel that was lurking here about my house,
he is sent to Newgate by this time. [*Aside.*]

Brid. Don't send I to Newgate, pray.

Peter. He'll murder us both, as sure as a gun.

Old. What, you are sneaking away, are you?

Oh! it's all too true—come back, or——

Brid. Yes, Sir——

Peter. No, Sir——

Old. Oh! Mary Ann! Mary Ann! I could never
have imagined—call Mary Ann hither.

Both. Yes, Sir [*they run out.*]

Old. Now will they plot, and put their heads together.
Mary Ann! Mary Ann! Oh! here she comes.

Enter MARY ANN, playing with a cup and ball.

Mary. [*Sings*] "Three children sliding on the ice"
—so, you be come, I see.

Old. Yes, I am come home.

Mary. Better late than never. I began to think as how you had forgot poor I. I expected you all the live long, long day—so I did; and there did not go a coach or a cart, or an horse or an ass, but I thought it was you. Ah! I am glad you're come. What's the matter? Ben't you well?

Old. Fatigued after my journey. You have been very well, I hope, since I left you—

Mary. Oh! yes, purely—neither sick nor sorry, not I. By goles, that is not true neither; for last night——

Old. Last night!——What of last night?

Mary. Little Pompey barked so all night long I could not sleep a wink.

Old. Is that all? You have not been out any where, have you?

Mary. Out! La! where should I go? I don't like going out in this strange outlandish place. I like the country better by half.

Old. Well! well! you shall go back soon.

Mary. But then may'nt I go and see sister Harriet first? An ill natur'd thing, that's what she is! She has not been to see poor I ever since I came to the great town.

Old. You shall see her. So you passed your time very merrily?

Mary. Oh! never better in all my days. But you don't seem glad to see a body!

Old. Yes, yes; I am glad to see you. The little Jezebel won't tell me a word. [*Aside*] Shall I tax her with it directly, or wait a little longer, to see her cunning? Let you and I go and chat a little together above stairs.

Mary. Ah! you look cross. With all my heart—I'll go. One, two, three, and away! [*Exit.*]

Old. The little frippery! How she carries it off!—Oh! the devil! I burn—I'm in a fever! I have had the grass cut under my feet! Oh! the young Magdalen!—the sly iniquity! [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

The Street. Enter BELFORD.

Bel. Nature never design'd me for a knight errant, Don Quixote would have stormed fifty castles, while my dull brain is hatching one poor project. What must be done?

Enter LOVIBOND.

Loxi. Ay! ay! there he is, I see.

Bel. 'Sdeath! no way to convey a message toher!

Loxi. Full of mischief! Your servant, sir.

Bel. Mr. Lovibond!

Levi. I was in quest of you.

Bel. 'Tis a mark of your friendship.

Levi. I mean to prove my friendship, do you see. I don't like to see young men losing their time. It is now fit you should understand yourself, and fix upon something that may settle your head a little.

Bel. Ah, Sir! 'tis in your power—

Levi. Ay! much is in my power. I have a fair ward, Mr. Belford—

Bel. He is going to propose her to me. [*Aside.*] I know her perfectly, Sir.

Levi. Then I don't inform you of it. She is handsome, spirited, and sensible.

Bel. I am no stranger to her merit.

Levi. Then I don't inform you of that neither. To-morrow I intend to gratify the wishes of her heart, and make her mine by marriage.

Bel. What so soon, Sir? This is news.

Levi. Then I inform you of it; and I will inform you of another thing too. She has a mortal aversion to you, and desires you will trouble her no more.

Bel. You amaze me, Sir! The devil! She has not blabbed to him, I hope. [*Aside.*]

Levi. What a mortified countenance he puts on!

Bel. This is all an absolute riddle, Mr. Lovibond.

Levi. Then I'll unriddle it to you. She perceived you dangling after her in all public places, whenever I took her abroad with me. She understood those artful glances you cast towards her; she could interpret every amorous sigh; she bid me tell you so.

Bel. She did! Then perhaps I know how to interpret her meaning. [Aside.]

Levi. She says, you may think her a melancholy prisoner; but you may spare your walks up and down the street: and so she would have acquainted you long ago, but she wanted a proper person to convey her sentiments to you.

Bel. She has found a trusty messenger at last.

Levi. Ha! ha! so she has; she knows she could trust me. Ha! ha! I thought it a pity you should lose any more time; and so now you may go and bow, and kneel, and make a monkey of yourself before some other window.

Bel. Since it is so, Sir, I must submit. Her meaning is deeper than he is aware of. [Aside.]

Levi. Don't be dishearten'd; you may succeed elsewhere. She allows you to be of a very comely figure, a well proportioned person; but 'tis all lost upon her. She considers me as her father, and has no unnatural passion for profligate youngsters.

Bel. I believe you, Sir. I desist from all pretension. I see this matter now in its true light; and, Sir, I shall molest you no more; and in that determination I take my leave.

Levi. Not so fast. Another word. Though you were to watch your time, and in my absence scale the wall, and get in at the window, and entreat her to elope with you, she still would cleave to me.

Bel. That I dare say. I'll try her though. [Aside.] I am perfectly satisfied, Sir.

Levi. And hark ye. You may come as often as you will about the house, she will not exchange a word with you out of the window; nor settle any scheme with you. Ha! ha! you see you are fully understood.

Bel. I shall ever esteem you as my friend, and I shall lose no more time; that you may tell the lady. She shall never have reason to upbraid me again; and so you may assure her.—Ten thousand blessings on her for this stratagem! She shall be mine this very night. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*]

Levi. What a look of chagrin there was! I have trained the girl up to this. Ha! ha! Mary Ann will never have sense enough to behave in this manner. Ha! ha! [*Exit.*]

Enter BRUMPTON, and BRISK following.

Brisk. A pretty sort of jeopardy I have been in, master!

Brump. Traitor! let me see no more of you.

Brisk. And are those my thanks, Sir? You'll be so good as to give me a discharge.

Brump. I wish I could give you a discharge of a culverin.

Brisk. I am not so extravagant in my expectations as to desire that favour, Sir. Heav'n help me! I am more easily contented. Only just a small arrear of wages, if you please, with a little dash of a character for diligence, fidelity, and a smattering of what you call parts; if my master did not mar all upon occasion,

and leave me now and then in danger of dangling by the neck for attempting to serve him.

Brump. You are a villain!

Brisk. I am a fool.

Brump. Have not you betrayed me to Sir Theodore? let him into my whole secret? He knew nothing of my being in love in town here: but you must divulge it, and I must have him storming at me in a rage and fury: I must have my best concerted schemes disappointed by you. Begone, rascal, I have done with you!

Brisk. Mighty well, Sir! What possesses him? Only please, Sir, to settle that trifling balance.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter OLDCASTLE.

Old. It was well said by an old philosopher, "When you are in a passion, con over your alphabet." I have done so, and have recovered my temper. Walk in, Mary Ann; walk in.

Enter MARY ANN.

Mary. Ah! you have not taken any notice of me since you came home. Ah! I see you don't love me.

Old. You are much mistaken. I love you exceedingly. Draw a chair; sit down. Well! and how have you passed your time in my absence?

Mary. As well as any thing.

Old. Have you any news?

Mary. News! la, not I! Fickins! I fib though.
I have news to tell you.

Old. Have you? What is it, chicken?

Mary. Little kitten's dead!

Old. Indeed!

Mary. Ah! if you had seen all its pretty little tricks, and how it played about. It grieved me to lose she.—But squirrel's well.

Old. Is he?

Mary. Yes, and so is mackaw.

Old. Ay, that's good news.

Mary. Yes, and I have marked three shirts, and hemmed five handkerchiefs.

Old. Mighty well! [*Pauses, and looks at her earnestly.*] Mary Ann, this is a wide and dangerous world we live in: scandal, malice, and detraction are ever flying about, constantly on the wing, and spreading pernicious tales to the ruin of every character.

Mary. You frighten a body, you talk so—

Old. Draw near! sweet—draw near! You look charmingly! Mind what I say. Some impertinent neighbours have whispered, but I did not believe 'em: they have said, that while I was in the country, a young gentleman frequented here, and was well received, Mary Ann. But I have laid a wager there was no foundation for any such idle givings out.

Mary. How much have you laid?

Old. Five pounds to four.

Mary. All that! Make a hedge of it, as you did at the horse-race.

Old. Why so?

Mary. 'Cause you'll lose.

Old. Then there was a young gentleman here!

Mary. As sure as a gun! He was here for ever and for ever—morning, noon, and night.

Old. But, my little lambkin, did not I forbid any visits? I won't be certain; but if my memory does not fail me——

Mary. Oh! for a matter o'that, you may be certain. You did forbid it, sure enough.

Old. And why was I disobeyed, my dear?

Mary. Ah! you would have done the same yourself, as the song says. [*Sings awkwardly.*]

“Had you been in my place,

“Why you'd ha' done the same.”

Old. Very prettily sung! But explain, my sweet.

Mary. It's the surprisingest thing in the world. I'll tell you all about it.

Old. That's right; let us hear.

Mary. I was sitting in the balcony, thinking of no earthly thing, and he passed by on the other side of the way. Ah! he looked as handsome as an angel! And so he made me a low bow. I blushed up to my very ears; and so I got up, and made a low curtesy; and so he kissed his hand, and I could not help smiling at that: and so he bowed again and again, and I curtesied again and again; and then he walked up the street, and down the street, and to and fro, and backwards and forwards: and, would you believe it? he did not miss a time making me a bow, with all the

good nature in the world; and so I was as good natured as he: and if he had staid all night long, I should have staid too; for I thought it would not be right to be outdone in civility.

Old. Oh! those damned balconies! I always hated them. Well! well! go on, Mary Ann.

Mary. Well, and so the next day a large, comely, fat gentlewoman came to me; and she had three or four band-boxes full of fine things; and she said she had orders to give me my choice of charming lace, and charming ribbons. Ay! and she seemed very good-natured, and spoke in the prettiest manner!

Old. Oh! the execrable bawd! [*Aside.*]

Mary. You are very pretty, my dear, says she; but it's a pity you should be mew'd up here: and then she offered me to take me home to her own house; and said she would dizen me out with diamonds, and then a lord would fall in love with me.

Old. The infernal sorceress! [*Aside.*]

Mary. And then she said I had done a great deal of mischief, and that I wounded a young gentleman terribly. Who, I wound any body, says I? Yes, the gentleman I saw in the balcony. I was as sorry as any thing I had hurt him; but I could not tell how it was; and she said it was my eyes, and that he was shot through the heart, and would be dead and buried in two days time, if I did not see him.

Old. Oh! the damned agent of hell! [*Aside.*]

Mary. And then—could you think of her goodness! indeed I can't help loving her for it—she offered me

to go and meet the young gentleman at her house. I thanked her, and took it very kind: but I did not care to go to strange places, and so I said the gentleman might come here if he would.

Old. Oh! the travelling milliner! [*Aside.*] Well, and did he come?

Mary. That he did, sure enough; and he said the very sight of me cured him of his wounds. Ah! I am sure you can't blame me; for I could not let him die—so I could not. I almost cried my eyes out when little kitten died.

Old. Brother Lovibond is right. She has it, I fear. Oh! I dread the rest. [*Aside.*]

Mary. Ah! but you are angry now?

Old. No—not angry. Well? how did he behave?

Mary. Ah! he had such a pretty smile! and he gave me this twee; and he gave Bridget and Peter whole handfuls of money.

Old. What did he say?

Mary. Oh! the prettiest words in the world.

Old. But he did not touch you?

Mary. By goles, I beg your pardon for that, but he did though.

Old. I guessed so. [*Aside.*] Go on.

Mary. He kissed one a thousand and a thousand times.

Old. Daggers! daggers! daggers! [*Aside.*]

Mary. And squeezed my hand so tenderly!

Old. Poison! wormwood! wormwood! [*Aside.*]

Mary. He took one round the neck—

Old. I thought as much. [*Aside.*] Proceed.

Mary. And round the waist; and he——

Old. Now—now—it's all over! How I tremble!

Mary. What's the matter with you?

Old. Nothing. We shall have some rain. My corn shoots: that's all.

Mary. And he [*she smiles at him*]*—Ah! but I won't tell you; you'll be angry.*

Old. No—no—no. I love you dearly, Mary Ann; [*Laughs uneasily.*]*—I do indeed. Go on with your story; go on.*

Mary. Why then, he took my glove off, and almost eat my hand up with kisses.

Old. But was that all? Did you do nothing more to cure his wounds?

Mary. Look you there now! You are angry. Ought I to have done more?

Old. No; enough of all conscience. But, are you sure this was all?

Mary. He gave me this fan, and a pair of ear-rings; and I am sure it was very civil of him to shew so much good-nature to a stranger.

Old. Mary Ann, Mary Ann, all his smooth words, all his tendernes, all his smiles, were baits to entrap you, to ensnare, to deceive you, abuse you, ruin you.

Mary. Ah! but he told me to the contrary, over and over, and over again.

Old. I know the world, child. It was all for your destruction—to swallow you up in the jaws of ruin.

Go up to your room; all this shall be explained to you.

Mary. Ah! but you are out of humour with a body.

Old. Do as I bid you.

Mary. Yes, that's what I will. By goles, he's a sweet gentleman, for all you—that's what he is.—

[*Aside.*] [Exit.]

OLDCASTLE *alone.*

What an escape have I had! and yet her ingenuous manner of confessing all, gives me some hopes. I'll read her a lecture, and then I'll go and let Sir Theodore Brumpton know what a villain his son is. Oh! Mary Ann, Mary Ann!

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Street. Enter BRISK.

My dear good nature, hold you your tongue! You plead in vain; not a step will I budge. [*Striking his bosom*] I am rock, and will be made a dupe no more. Well said, my just resentment! we know the world now, and will be led a devil's dance no longer. Bravo, Brisk! now you are free, and your own man again. Service is a very unthankful office; and for the mere honour of—Pshaw! pox! now my honour must be heard. What will the world say of you, Mr. Brisk!—you that have hitherto been the first footman in Eng-

land, renowned for your parts and your abilities! What! give way now to a trifling difficulty? Money is absolutely necessary for your master's affairs. Mr. Oldcastle is his only resource, and you have orders to apply for it directly. But, my dear honour, you know what an empty bubble you are, and how often I have been kicked in your service! The more glory, man! If any body thinks it worth his while to kick you, it's a sign you are rising in the world. Those are the true marks of a footman's genius; those are the things that will raise you in the world, and make an exciseman of you at last! Bravo! I kindle at the thought! I must go on. One effort more, Brisk, and then. But how! how touch the cash! "My master is in the utmost distress, Sir, and will be for ever obliged to you." Pshaw! that will never do. I have a stratagem, and if I can but meet with master Oldcastle! Ha! as luck will have it—Courage, Brisk!—here he comes.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

Old. What a discovery have I made! I'll let his father, I'll let Sir Theodore know——

Brisk. Oh! Sir! I am glad I have met you at last. I have sought you through the whole town.

Old. You live with young Brumpton, don't you?

Brisk. The same, Sir. Such a tide of affairs coming upon him, such an unforeseen accident. Poor Sir Theodore, Sir! The good worthy gentleman, on his way from the country——

Old. I understood he was in town.

Brisk. He was coming to town, Sir; we expected him every hour: and now the fatal news is arrived. He was taken suddenly ill—too great a fulness of blood, No assistance near. It happened on the road: no surgeon; no barber to bleed him; the poor gentleman expired; and in the most critical moment—

Old. Carried off in this manner, you say; and without having time to be ill!

Brisk. Yes, Sir, without a single consultation of physicians. It's very hard. It's a pity he was in such a haste to die. But good sometimes comes of evil, they say. The news has wrought a wonderful change in my young master. Sir Theodore had made a match for him in the country—a great match indeed!

Old. Ay! I heard of it.

Brisk. And yet the son, perverse and obstinate, was in love here in town; that is, he fancied he was, with an insignificant hussey, and was determined to marry her, in opposition to his poor father.

Old. I have heard of that too.

Brisk. But he is now shocked that he should be such a monster of disobedience, and he gives up all thought of this town lady.

Old. That's right: the good young man—

Brisk. Ay! the good young gentleman, indeed. He renounces her for ever, Sir; and is resolved to go off immediately for the country; and, after he has performed the last duty to the best of men, who is now no more, he is determined to pay that regard to his memory

which he refused to his authority, when living, and marry no woman in the world but the woman designed for him by his father.

Old. The good young man! This is the best news I ever heard in my life. [*Aside.*] The good young man!

Brisk. But then his intention of going out of town, I fear, may be frustrated.

Old. As how! that must not be.

Brisk. Why we were kept a little bare of cash lately, just to reduce him to a sense of his duty; and now he wants wherewithal to discharge some little bills, before we set out for the country.

Old. Why, I am indebted to Sir Theodore's estate. The intentions of the young man must not be frustrated.

Brisk. Heaven forbid!

Old. Here! I have a purse here! Ha! ha! I shall get rid of a plague and a torment. [*Aside.*] I can let him have a couple of hundreds; [*Holds out the purse to him.*] and tell him he can't go out of town too soon. Good lack! poor Sir Theodore!

Enter Sir THEODORE.

Sir Theo. My son bid me speak to him, and luckily here he is.

Old. [*In amaze.*] Ye powers of heaven! Ye guardian Gods! assist me! help me!

Brisk. [*In a mock tone.*] Angels and ministers of

grace! what a damned accident is this! Let us run away, Sir.

Sir Theo. Hey! what's the matter? What do the people stare at?

Old. I am all over in a jelly! [*Drops the purse.*] Brisk, support me, lend me your arm!

Brisk. I have not strength, but crawling on the ground. He'll carry away your purse. You know he always loved money. [*Brisk makes towards the purse.*]

Sir Theo. Ha! ha! in the name of wonder, what possesses you?

Old. Disappear! for heaven's sake, disappear! I never did you wrong. I'll pay the money to your executor. I was advancing your son two hundred pounds in part payment. I never saw a ghost in all my days before!

Sir Theo. What! do you think I'm dead, Mr. Oldcastle? Ha! ha!

Old. And be you alive?

Sir Theo. As sure as you are alive, man! Ha! ha!

Old. I took you for a ghost. [*Striking Brisk with his cane.*] Sirrah! let that money alone. Hold me, Sir Theodore, hold me; I am ready to sink into the earth. [*Goes up to him.*] They told me you was dead. That fellow, Brisk—Hey! what are you running away with my money, scoundrel! villain! robber!

Brisk. May be you are used to ghosts, Sir; I can't stay in a place that's haunted. [*Exit.*]

Sir Theo. Compose yourself; and let me understand this business,

Old. [*Laying hold of him.*] I protest you are alive! That son of your's! he kills his father before he is dead—that abettor of his mischiefs! he told me you was carried off suddenly, and now my two hundred pounds is carried off suddenly.

Sir Theo. I am thunder-struck! I am as much amazed as you was this moment. You shock me, Mr. Oldcastle. Could my son engage in such a scene of wickedness?

Old. I am sorry to say it, but I fear he is a very wicked young man. They have imposed upon me; he has robbed me. This money is got for the vilest purposes, to enable him to fly in your face; and carry off a little wench that is not worth a groat.

Sir Theo. Not worth a groat! and he had the assurance to refer me to you; said she had an estate, that there was a borough upon it; and that you knew all the particulars.

Old. Borough upon her estate! ha! ha! Yes, yes, I know the particulars. Lack-a-day, Sir Theodore, who do you think she is?—a milliner's 'prentice that has eloped from her mistress.

Sir Theo. My blood fires at him. I am out of all patience, Mr. Oldcastle. Thus my family is to be disgraced by a worthless, hair-brained blockhead! A milliner's 'prentice!

Old. Even so.

Sir Theo. The fool! the coxcomb! the——Here, I'll pay you back your money.

Old. No, you need not do that. Get it back from

him: it will burn in his pocket. The sooner he leaves the town the better. I shall be at ease, if I once hear he is gone.

Sir Theo. Mr. Oldcastle, you are very good to feel so much concern in this affair.

Old. Yes, I have a deep concern in it: but hark ye, Sir Theodore, don't let him know you had your information from me.

Sir Theo. No: you may depend upon me: not a syllable. [Exit,

Old. When he is gone, I shall sleep in peace. I said I would do him a good turn with his father.

[Exit,

SCENE II.

Lovibond's House. Enter HARRIET.

How my heart beats!—Post haste—gallop—gallop! and no wonder. It's a dangerous experiment I have tried. Could I but convey this letter! Mr. Belford then would know my meaning. Here! here comes my turn-key!

Enter LOVIBOND.

Lovi. Well, Harriet, I have executed your commission.

Har. How did he receive it?

Lovi. He was very much mortified, though I thought I marked, as he went off, an odd sort of a dry constrained smile.

Har. But I shall have no more reason to complain of him, I hope?

Levi. Ha! ha! I almost pitied the poor devil.

Har. He deserves no pity, Mr. Lovibond; he is a sad wretch.

Levi. I believe it: but he knows he was engaged in a vain pursuit; he said so himself, and bid me assure you he would lose no more time.

Har. That revives me——

Levi. No, no, he will hardly come this way again.

Har. I don't know what to say to that. I dread the contrary. I am afraid he will not renounce me for ever so easily as you may imagine.

Levi. And, pray, what reason have you for thinking so?

Har. I have terrible proofs against him, while you was out he came again under my window.

Levi. Ay!

Har. I ran away at the sight of him; but the window being open, he flung this little box into the room with a letter in it.

Levi. A letter in it!——

Har. Yes, the wicked contriver! a letter in it. I ran to the window to throw it to him again, but he was gone, and then it occurred to me that it might not be quite so prudent to throw it into the street, lest it should fall into the hands of malicious people, who might misinterpret appearances to my disadvantage.

Levi. That was wisely judged.

Har. I have been ever since thinking that it ought to be returned, and if I had a proper person——

Levi. Who so proper as myself? let me have it.

Har. No, no, it would affront him more if delivered by a common porter.

Lovi. Excuse me, I am the fittest person—a letter in a box! what contrivances they have! I'll take care he shall have it, and he will look so silly when he perceives all his schemes are blasted.

Har. Why indeed, it will astonish him the more, if you deliver it.

Lovi. So it will, ha! ha! it will be a rare stroke of revenge, ha! ha!

Har. [*She laughs.*] The newest that ever was.

Lovi. I like it of all things, but first let me see the contents of his letter——

Har. Dear heart, not for the world! would you give the horrid man room to imagine that a girl of character would so much as open the seal of his filthy letter? Let me advise, Mr. Lovibond; to return it unopened will be the strongest mark of contempt, and the greatest affront that can be put upon him.

Lovi. There is something in that——your wisdom charms me——you endear yourself to me more and more every hour——

Har. You'll use your own discretion whether to open it or not—but the reasons I have given——

Lovi. Are to me conclusive. I'll about this business directly, ha! ha! we'll put the greatest affront in the world upon him, ha! ha! the truest mark of contempt, ha! ha! good-bye, rose-bud, good-bye. [*Exit.*]

Har. Yes, yes, let him have it unopened——If this plot takes, I shall have my utmost wish——and mak-

ing him my convenient, my go-between in the business, gives life and spirit to the plot—I'll outwit him, if I can—— [Exit.

SCENE III.

Sir Theodore's House. Enter BRUMPTON and BRISK.

Brump. Admirably managed, Brisk! now I have the sinews of war—— [Tossing up a purse.

Brisk. It was got out of the fire, I promise you, Sir——

Brump. Your services are of higher value for it.

Brump. And yet I fear my services may one day or other bring me to—What do you think your father will say to me?

Brump. Po! absurd—Mr. Oldcastle will talk matters over with him. I desired my father to make it his business to see my friend Oldcastle.

Brisk. You desired him to do that, did you?

Brump. Yes, I desired him.

Brisk. And his coming was owing to you?

Brump. Yes, yes; ha! ha! it was I occasioned that—I desired him to go.

Brisk. Then pray desire any body else but Brisk to go on your errands for the future—more misfortunes! here comes Sir Theodore; settle it as well as you can with him, I wash my hands of it, and now legs do your office, [Runs off.

Enter Sir THEODORE.

Sir Theo. So, Sir! [*Pauses and looks at him.*] Thou graceless! thou ungrateful!——

Brump. What's in the wind now?

[*Aside.*

Sir Theo. Easy, calm unfeeling prodigal!

Brump. Sir, these are words that——

Sir Theo. That you deserve, and worse, if indignation did not choak them here—Look ye, Sir, I spared no pains in your education; expence, indulgence, care, affection, all that a fond father could bestow, were your's. I hoped to see you a young man of principle, governed by sentiments of honour, a credit, and a comfort to me; but what a sad reverse of all this! Your reputation gone, your character blasted, and vile expedients every day made use of.

Brump. Upon my word, Sir, this bitterness of reproach, how have I deserved!

Sir Theo. How deserved! [*Pauses, and looks at him.*] And dare you ask the question? refund that money, Sir—the two hundred pounds, out of which you have gulled an easy worthy friend of mine; restore it this moment, or perhaps it may be the last you will ever handle.

Brump. And where is the mighty harm, Sir.

Sir Theo. I have no patience with you, I have lived too long for you, have I? The sand lingers in the glass, and you want to shake it out! return that money this instant, or never look me in the face again.

Brump. If it must be so, Sir—but if you will please to hear me——

Sir Theo. Po! po! I have full conviction, for the meanest purposes too this stratagem was contrived! to run counter to my will, and carry off a little obscure girl, and so live despised, a scandal to your father, and a laughing-stock to all your acquaintance: go, and reform, set out for the country directly, or never darken my doors again. [Exit.]

Brump. What the devil can I make of all this! I am certainly out of luck to-day. It does not signify, I'll pursue Mary Ann with more spirit than ever, I'll to her house this moment: since difficulties come in my way, genius must surmount them, that's all.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

Oldcastle's House. Enter OLDCASTLE and MARY.

ANN.

Mary. A mortal sin!

Old. Yes, a mortal sin! you are unexperienced in these matters. It is a sin, child, to accept of presents from men, twees, fans, and Brussels lace. Brussels lace has done as much mischief as the forbidden fruit—I wish I had bred her up a quaker [*Aside.*]—Mind my words—to indulge wanton young men in liberties with your person, to let 'em fold you round the waist, play with your neck, and print lascivious kisses on your

lips, 'tis the sure road to destruction, 'tis horrible, Mary Ann, horrible and abominable!

Mary. Ah! but I don't believe that, and a pity it should, for [*smiling at him*] it's very agreeable. I am sure I like it better than questions and commands, or the fool in the middle, or hide and go seek either.

Old. I tell you they are all abominable things till the marriage-ceremony is performed.

Mary. And is it allowed then?

Old. Then, and then only, Mary Ann.

Mary. [*Smiling.*] By goles, I am glad to hear that, and so marry me as soon as you will, I shall be pure and happy with him then——

Old. With whom?

Mary. Why, with that sweet charming young— Ah! look you there——

Old. Hold, beware, Mary Ann; I marry you for myself only, you must despise and detest all others.

Mary. Ah! I never shall find it in my heart to hate him.

Old. It will be the destruction of you even to think of him. Look you, child; mark well my admonitions. [*Sits down.*] Come hither, hold up your head, child, listen attentively. [*He raises her head.*] I take you to my bed, Mary Ann, my true and lawful wife; but take heed, for but now you was tumbling headlong down the gulph of perdition.

Mary. I wish you would let me go and feed my birds.

Old. Compose your thoughts, I say. Marriage is an

holy institution, and exacts rigorous duties on the part of the wife—you must love, honour, and obey your husband; therefore be upon your guard, the enemy of womankind is for ever prowling about in quest of prey, always ready to seduce, to murder, and devour, and swallow up in the jaws of ruin every frail young creature that comes in his way.

Mar. [*Bursts into tears.*] But they shan't swallow me up, so they shan't!

Old. Ay! ay! this will do her good—come, come, dry up your tears.

Mary. [*Sobbing.*] I did not do any thing to be run away with in the jaws of ruin, so I did not!

Old. No, no, all will be well—'tis for your good I speak—so—so—so—have done crying: I know you'll be good—there—make me a curtsy—mighty well! be a good girl——

Mary. Ah! but they shan't murder and devour me, for there are folks enough in London all hours of the day to assist a body; and if he comes in the night, I can call the watch, so I can——

Old. I am pleased with her simplicity. This young profligate that you have let into my house, if he should come under your window again—that's right, I have a thought—you shall fling him out all his presents, you shall write him a letter, and tell him what a monster he is.—Come, take that chair, sit down, take that pen, and write as I dictate to you——

Mary. [*Sitting down.*] La! I does not understand all this——

Old. [*Walking about.*] Write as I dictate. Come, begin—Mr. Brumpton [*Goes to the side of the scene.*] Peter, bring me up a candle——

Mary. “Dear Mr. Brumpton!”——

Old. Mr. Brumpton, and no more——

Mary [*Smiling aside.*] Very well——

Old. [*Walking about.*] “You are a vile man, and your visits I now see sprung from a bad design”——

Mary. [*Aside.*] Ah! I don’t like those words. By goles [*Smiling as his back is turned.*] I know what I’ll do. [*Stifling a laugh.*] I have wrote it——

Old. “To ruin my future happiness”——

Mary. Happiness——

Old. “Your intention is base, and unworthy of a gentleman”——

Mary. Very well——

Old. “You are odious in your person; detestable in your morals, and the scorn of all our sex.” Have you wrote it?

Mary. Stay, stay, then—all our sex——

Old. “I am in love with Mr. Biddulph,”

Mary. Who?

Old. Write as I bid you. “I am in love with Mr. Biddulph, a worthy good gentleman, and out of his hands it never shall be in your power to seduce me.”

Mary. [*Smiling.*] Very well——

Old. “Therefore let me never see you any more—Mary Ann Richley.”

Mary. Mary Ann Richley——

Old. Now let me read it——

Mary. Ah! stay, stay a moment, not quite done.

Enter PETER.

Peter. Here be the candle, master, the gentleman is walking under the window now——

Old. Is he? make haste, fold up the letter—let me do it, let me do it—make haste—come, come, dispatch, he'll be gone, else—you shall throw it to him now, and all his presents—come, come, make haste!

Mary. Ah! I am ready: I like this of all things.

[Exeunt in a violent hurry.]

SCENE V.

The Street. Enter BELFORD and LOVIBOND.

Loxi. Once more well met, Sir. You can write I fancy, can't you?

Bel. The drift of that question, Sir?——

Loxi. I fancy you know this little bauble [*showing a box.*] You don't know it, to be sure—no, nor the letter in the inside; here, take it back; I charge nothing for the postage, you have it unopened, in *statu quo* [*opens the box.*] Look ye here; ha! no direction upon it—that was cunning—here, here, you have it in good order, and well conditioned as it came—ha! ha! Harri-ri-ri will not read a word of it; she had no curiosity about it.

Bel. But I have [*Aside, and taking the letter, opens it.*] heavens bless her wit! [*Aside, and reads.*]

Loxi. Ay! You know the hand-writing. Take notice you broke the seal yourself; none of us read a

word of it, we return it unopened, to make the affront the deeper.

Bel. I believe you, Sir; I see you never read a word of it.

Lovi. Not a syllable, her pride would not suffer it.

Bel. Well, since it is come to this, being out of humour will avail nothing. Ha! ha! I can't help laughing.

Lovi. That's pleasant of you, ha! ha! ha!

Bel. Yes, very pleasant, ha! ha! ha!

Lovi. See what your intrigues are come to.

Bel. Yes, Sir, you have brought 'em to a fine pass.

Lovi. Ay! you see I am not to be tricked.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

Old. Mr. Lovibond, I am wild with joy.

Lovi. And so am I.

Bel. Who is that old fellow? [*Aside, and reads his letter.*]

Old. I have managed matters charmingly. Who is that spark?—

Lovi. You need not be shy of him. I'll venture to say you have not managed as well as I have, Mr. Old—

Old. Call me Biddulph. [*Apart.*]

Lovi. Well! I fancy you will toss no more letters in at the window.

Bel. No truly, Sir, not I; and I beg you will assure the lady that—

Lovi. Ay! let us hear; you need not mind this

gentleman—come, come, let us hear—now brother
Old——

Old. Call me Biddulph——

[*Apart.*

Levi. Ayt now hear him, Mr. Biddulph.

Bel. I beg the lady's pardon, Sir——I resign
myself to her inclinations, and shall obey her com-
mands——

Levi. Very well.

Bel. You are too powerful a rival, and since it is so,
you will be pleased to tell her I most heartily approve
of the choice she has made.

Levi. Do you hear that?

[*to Oldcastle.*

Bel. Her superior sense shines forth in every action
of her life; and, Sir, I will only add that I shall never
give her cause to complain again—you will report
me to the lady, and, Sir, I take my leave. [Exit.

Levi. There, there, you see what an happy man I
am——

Old. Well, and now let me tell you——

Levi. I can't stay to hear——I am in the elements
with joy——brother Oldcastle, your servant. [Exit.

Old. But, brother Lovibond, let me tell you—po!
an envious man, he can't bear a neighbour's happiness
——lack-a-day! I wish he had staid, for here comes that
graceless young——

Enter BRUMPTON, humming a tune.

Old. Well, Mr. Brumpton——the young dog, no-
thing affects him [*Aside.*]
—Well, and your intrigues,
how go they on?

Brump. Oh! I longed to see you: you have not been able to reconcile my father, I find.

Old. No; I did all I could. I spoke very handsomely of you to Sir Theodore, I assure you.

Brump. And yet he is worse than ever.

Old. He is very positive——well! but the business of your love——

Brump. Why, it was likely to be somewhat embarrassed——

Old. I long to hear it. [*Aside.*] As how, pray?

Brump. The old curmudgeon is returned from the country——

Old. Ayl

Brump. The servants have changed their tone; and the door is shut in my face.

Old. I can't help laughing——ha! ha! this Mr. Bidulph knows what he is about, I fancy——

Brump. Po!——the fellow is fitter to have the funeral service read over him than the marriage ceremony—he made her come to the balcony——

Old. Well! and how was that?

Brump. He muffled himself up behind the curtain—I could not distinguish him—she threw me out some trinkets I had given her—But, my dear friend, she flung a letter with 'em.

Old. I long to hear about that.

Brump. The contents of it amaz'd me.

Old. I dare say—she told you her mind, I reckon.

Brump. Most freely, most openly—ha! ha! old Nostrodamus is outwitted—for, look you here—here,

in her own fair hand---ten thousand blessings on her!
[*kisses the letter*] Here, Sir, the genuine dictates of her heart-----

Old. He is mad, sure!--let me see it.

Brump. [*reads*] "Dear Mr. Brumpton, you are a charming man, and your civilities, I am sure, sprung from an honest design for my future happiness."

Old. In the name of wonder, what is all this! [*Aside.*

Brump. [*reads*] "Your intentions are generous, and worthy of a gentleman"-----

Old. The little hypocritical sorceress! [*Aside.*

Brump. [*reads*] "You are handsome in your person, and your manners also; and the admiration of all our sex"-----

Old. Oh! the Jezebel! [*Aside.*

Brump. [*reads*] "I hate Mr. Biddulph, an odious old wretch; and"-----

Old. The vile harlotry! [*Aside.*

Brump. [*reads*] "And out of my guardian's hands it is in your power to relieve me. Your's, indeed, and indeed, until death us do part---Mary Ann Richley."

Old. She has reversed every word of it!

Brump. There's an adventure! ha! ha! ha! is not she a charming girl? you don't partake of my joy.

Old. Partake of your joy.--I--I--I--yes.

[*Looking uneasy.*

Brump. What a way old Biddulph will be in!-----

Old. Why, I must say I feel for him-----

Brump. Feel for him! a wretch like that! so unge-

nerous a guardian, so base a betrayer of his trust! who could offer his withered superannuated love to the sweetest girl, and with the winter of old age nip so much beauty in its bud! January and May joined together! does not that make you laugh?

Old. I am afraid of laughing, though I love it of all things---it sets me a coughing always---well! but trouble may come of all this-----

Brump. Never be uneasy---an't you amazed at my success?

Old. I am, indeed---I never was so confounded in all my days. [*Aside*] I wish as heartily as a minister of state that there was not such a thing as pen, ink, and paper in the kingdom. [*Aside.*

Brump. What's the matter with you?

Old. A megrim has suddenly taken me---take care what you do---Mr. Oldcastle, you are a blockhead, an overweening, cuckoldy blockhead! [*Aside.*]---I wish your father mayn't hear of this---Oh! the vile baggage! I must run home directly----- [*Exit.*

Brump. How indifferent the old muckworm is grown! but this dear enchanting letter!---Oh! this joy is too powerful!---Sir Theodore never made this leg---ha! ha!

Enter BELFORD.

Bel. Brumpton, are you in good humour? May I venture to-----

Brump. Belford, let me embrace you---I tread in air. [*Embracing him.*

Bel. My dear Brumpton, I too am wild with joy-

I am out of my senses. [*Walks about, humming a tune.*]

Brump. [*hum a different tune.*] Oh! such an unexpected, transporting, ravishing event!

Bel. Such a surprize, above all romance!

Brump. Oh! Belford, I am the happiest rogue——

Bel. Such unutterable bliss, my dear boy!

Brump. Her wit is equal to her beauty!

Bel. The greatest stroke of invention.--Ha! ha!

Brump. Such a sweet epistle!

Bel. So divine a letter—and the old fellow brought it himself!

Brump. No, no, you mistake; she flung it out of the window.

Bel. Po! I tell you he was the bearer of it himself.

Brump. You are quite wrong; she was in the balcony, and——

Bel. Pshaw! give me leave to know: did not I see him?

Brump. There was no seeing him distinctly; he was skulking behind the curtain, and then she threw the letter down to me: Oh! the idol of my heart! the lovely Mary Ann!——

Bel. Mary Ann! you are the most perplexing---death! I was telling you how my sweet goddess contrived to send me a letter by her very guardian——

Brump. I did not hear a syllable of that matter: I was telling you——

Bel. Then I'll tell you how it was——

Brump. No, no; hear the story of my happiness.

Bel. Nay, nay; mine is the most surprizing.

Brump. Look ye here, my boy—[*showing a letter.*]
the work of her own fingers!

Bel. There, there, [*showing his letter*] more eloquence
than in all Cicero!

Brump. [*reads.*] “Dear Mr. Brumpton, you are
a sweet man, and your civilities”——

Bel. [*reads.*] “You will be surprized at this let-
ter; and more so at the manner of conveying it.”

Brump. [*reads.*] “The admiration of all our sex.”

Bel. [*reads.*] “But I must hazard all, or fall a
sacrifice to the avarice of my guardian”——

Brump. [*reads.*] “And out of his hands it is in
your power to relieve me”——

Bel. [*reads.*] “I love you, Mr. Belford; will you
despise me for telling you so? I hope not.”

Brump. [*reads.*] “Your’s, indeed, and indeed,
until death us do part, Mary Ann Richley.”

Bel. [*reads.*] “Contrive some means for my es-
cape, and heaven and earth combined shall not
keep you from me—the disconsolate Harriet.”

[*Exeunt together.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter OLDCASTLE and LOVIBOND.

Lovibond.

YES, she told me all about the young rake—hell’s visits,
gave me back his letter unopened, to return it to him

with my own hands. Is not she a miracle of goodness and superior sense?

Old. It was very sensible. How often will you ask me?

Lovi. Is not she trained up in the paths that she should walk? When will Mary Ann do as much?

Old. Ay! there it stings! He has heard all, and I am blown! [*Aside.*

Lovi. I have seen my gentleman since; I have given him his letters; told him what a mortal aversion she has to him; and I warrant me, I have sent him off with a flea in his ear.

Old. I thought to ha' done the same by young Brumpton; but the minx has so bamboozled me!

[*Aside.*

Lovi. You seem disturbed, ha! ha! mortified at my success, I suppose, ha! ha! or some fly-flap has caught Mary Ann, and she, poor thing——

Old. He has hit the nail o'the head [*Aside.*] You need not trouble your head about Mary Ann: leave her to my care, Sir——

Lovi. But, Mr. Oldcastle——

Old. But, brother Lovibond——

Lovi. You are the strangest man——

Old. Po! po! you have no friendship for any body.

Lovi. No friendship!

Old. None: all for yourself, and wishing for other people's misfortunes——

Lovi. This is your gratitude, Mr. Oldcastle. Did not I help you to a rich young spendthrift, who wanted

interrupting each other. both reading together eagerly.

its,
him

a thousand pounds; and did not he give you his bond, and then did not I make him draw a bill upon you for the money, and did not I bid you sue him for both the bond and the bill? was not I a witness in the cause for you? I'll have you indicted for subornation of perjury——

Old. If you go to that, who taught you to sink ships in the chops of the Channel?

Lovi. And who shewed you the way to be an engrosser of corn, and a forestaller of markets?

Old. Your smuggling, Mr. Lovibond——

Lovi. Your usury, Mr. Oldcastle——

Old. Mighty well. I see what it's come to. These are the thanks I meet with—I, that first laid the scheme of keeping these girls' fortunes all to ourselves. Here ends all intercourse between us; I break off; I have no more to say to you; and so now you know my resolution——

[*Exit.*]

Lovi. Ha! ha! what a turmoil the poor man has put himself in! ha! ha! Things are going wrong with him: I never shall be at rest till I see the bottom of all this.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Sir THEODORE and BRISK.

Sir Theo. And look ye, Sir, if ever you presume to meddle again between father and son——

Brisk. I meddle, Sir, between——

Sir Theo. If ever again I lay my finger upon a single act of your's——

Brisk. Sir, if you would permit me, all this expence

of passion might be sayed. I have, to be sure, been caught tripping a little or so; but it is never too late to take up; I have reflected upon the matter, and without any great pretence to more wisdom than falls to the share of the like of me. I have obtain'd my dismissal, and bid adieu to my master's service for ever——

Sir Theo. Quitted his service, have you?

Brisk. Yes, Sir, I am going down to my father's, in the country: my father's in a very pretty way; has some very good farms, and so I think to settle there for the rest of my days——

Sir Theo. I am glad of this, sirrah, and since you have left him, I forgive you, do you see—here, here's something to bear your expences down. I commend your resolution much—but hark ye, Brisk, now you are going, it will be honest of you to inform me—it will make some amends for what is past—is my son really in love with this girl?

Brisk. At present he is, but la! Sir, if she were once remov'd out of his way——

Sir Theo. That is what I have been thinking of; that would do the business, would not it?——

Brisk. Most clearly, Sir; out of sight, out of mind with him—If in return for your honour's goodness, by any little service in my poor way——

Sir Theo. I thank you, Brisk—I thank you; but there will be no occasion for you. I have employed an elderly body, a good, cunning, matron-like woman, who

understands the whole art of laying springes for young damsels.

Brisk. Nothing can be better imagined, Sir——

Sir Theo. She is to insinuate herself into the house, as such people know how to do——

Brisk. No doubt, Sir——

Sir Theo. And then, when she has allured my young madam abroad with her, she shall then be so disposed of, that he may beat the bush long enough before he finds her, I warrant him——

Brisk. You have hit upon the only way in the world, Sir——

Sir Theo. It is an honest artifice, Brisk, to rescue the coxcomb from destruction. I wish you well, Brisk—I wish you well. [Exit.

Brisk. Health attend your honour!—So, here's a mine detected! and my master is flying wild about the town, thinking it's all enchanted ground he treads, and at last he'll be blown up in the air; with all my heart, let him; let him see how he looks when he comes down again—and yet—there again now, temptations are beginning their old trade—well, something must be done, and so now mine away, Sir Theodore; be as good a pioneer as you will, I warrant me I'll countermine you—— [Exit.

SCENE II.

Oldcastle's House. Enter PETER and BRIDGET.

Peter. It's pure lucky, Bridget, he did not find the gentleman in the closet——

Bridg. He lay close all the time like a mouse in a cheese; and master walked about the room, and gnawed his lip, and gnashed his teeth, and gave the table an hugeous rap with his stick, and fetched a deep groan, and did not say so much as one word, and then led Miss Mary Ann out of the room——

Peter. I'll tell you what, Bridget, it's all owing to his finding out the young gentleman's visits here to Miss Mary Ann——

Bridg. Yes, yes; it stands to reason how it must be that: dear me! he locks poor Miss Mary Ann up here, for all the world like an horse in a pound, and I can't tell why, or by reason whereof, not I——

Peter. I'll tell you, Bridget—I understand these matters: he locks her up, do you see, because as why he is troubled with jealousy——

Bridg. But how should that enter his head?

Peter. Oh! that pops into his head, because——

Bridg. What is jealousy, pray, Peter?

Peter. Dear heart, you are such another—jealousy, you may know, won't let a body sleep: it's, for all the world, like so many rats behind the wainscot—I'll tell you now by way of likeness: the gentleman you know gave you a guinea: now putting case, any body was to

come for to take away your guinea, do you see, that would put you in a passion, would it not?

Bridg. Oh! I understand it now——

Peter. It's as like it as any thing; for see but here, Miss Mary Ann is his guinea; and you know when a body wants to be fingering another man's money, what does he do then? why he brings you down to 'sides an whole heap of London counsel, to quarrel about it, and abuse one another, and be together by the ears for ever so many hours——

Bridg. I remember all that, and it's as like Miss Mary Ann as it can stare; but then I want to know why does not every body make the same fuss, and lock his wife up too?

Peter. Po! you fool! that's because every body does not love his wife as well as a guinea——

Bridg. Then I understands the whole git of it---but but la! look ye there——

Peter. It's master, as sure as a gun—how he looks, Bridget! let us get out of his way—— [Exeunt.]

Enter OLDCASTLE.

The perfidious jade! what a trick she has played me! Oh! the little, treacherous——

Enter MARY ANN.

Mary. La! you look so strange, you are enough to frighten a body——

Old. Mary Ann, I have seen Mr. Brumpton.

Mary. Have you? [Laughs aside.]

Old. He was wonderfully pleased with your letter---

Mary. [*smiling aside*] By goles, I know why.

Old. What did you say to him?

Mary. Say to him! [*Turns away, and smiles.*]

Old. Did you write what I bid you?

Mary. [*laughing*] Altered it a little bit!

Old. A good deal, I fancy.

Mary. [*laughs*] By gingo, I played you that trick.

Old. And was it not base to deceive your guardian, who loves you dearly, and intends to make you his wedded wife?

Mary. I could not find it in my heart to say the things you wanted me---

Old. And don't you consider what a crime it is?---

Mary. It was only to play upon you---

Old. But such wicked letters, Mary Ann---

Mary. It was you shewed me the way: how should I have thought of such a thing?

Old. That stings, that galls---[*aside.*] But there are women, Mary Ann, who can write without being bid.

Mary. What, all out of their own heads?

Old. Even so---

Mary. And what do they write?

Old. They make assignations; inform their gallants when their husbands are to be from home; they fix the time for amorous meetings, at routs and drums---

Mary. Rout and drums! What be they?

Old. Wicked assemblies! where women lose more than they can pay, and then pawn their persons, toge-

ther with the husband's honour, and so infamously pay off the debts they have contracted.

Mary. And then do the men toy and play, and take 'em round the waist?

Old. Ay!--then their point is gained——

Mary. [*smiling*] That's comical enough.

Old. And then they fly wild about this town—to the seducing gaities of Vauxhall and Ranelagh——

Mary. La! I never heard of those——

Old. Ranelagh, child, is a wicked round of sin, intrigue, and clandestine love; where crowds gather together, stealing glances, exchanging letters, negotiating riotous pleasures. Vauxhall is a very Paradise of forbidden fruits, where shady walks exclude the conscious day, and every blandishment of sense, music, wine, and opportunity, conspire to waken the voluptuous passions.

Mary. [*smiling.*] And must not Mary Ann see those places?

Old. No: never, never, Mary Ann. Here, here is the marriage-act for you to read—all young girls ought to have it by heart. This will teach them how unnatural it is to fall in love without the consent of king, lords, and commons!

Mary. Ah! but I can't stay for their leave: thy are too great folks for me to think of!——

Old. Take it up stairs with you: it is a very edifying tract!——

Mary. Very well, I'll go—[*as she's going*] I'll go and try if I can't write a letter out of my own head. [*Exit.*]

Old. When she has read the marriage-act, she will have a proper sense of her duty. So Peter! so Bridget! walk in——

Enter PETER and BRIDGET.

Old. Now if I can tutor these to my mind! [*Aside.*

Bridg. For the love of mercy, Sir——

Peter. I'll never do so any more, master.

Old. Come hither both—I am not angry—you are no strangers to the affection I bear Mary Ann.

Bridg. No, that's for sure—you love her as well as you do a guinea.

Old. How now, Malapert!

Bridg. I am sure Peter said so.

Peter. No: not I, for the varsal world!

Old. What's the matter, numskulls! Listen to me; watch my house well; and be sure you never let any powdered-fops put a foot over the threshold of my door——

Bridg. Yes, Sir!

Peter. No, Sir!

Old. But the wily arts of young men!—think of a gay embroidered coxcomb coming to you with a piteous look; “I languish for your mistress; I die in her absence; let me but see her, or else I have one foot in my grave already.”——

Peter. Be gone about your business, fellow, says I—this is no place for you. My young mistress desires no such trumpery.

Old. Mighty well, Peter, it can't be better; but you,

Mrs. Bridget, will take some compassion upon a poor dying swain.

Bridg. Go farther a field, and set up the sign of the horns somewhere else—do---no admittance for you here——

Old. Charming, Bridget, charming! you do it wonderfully: but then, says he, “I’ll lie down in the street, and there breathe my last”——

Peter. And then I run up to the garret window, and souse a bucket of water on his head——

Old. Excellent! excellent! it will cool his passion for him! have a bucket of water always ready---Ha! ha! I should like to see him streaming like a river god in the street---I am delighted with you both. But then he comes with his damned bewitching gold. Here, Peter, to drink my health—here, Mrs. Bridget, to buy you some tea.

Peter. We want none of your dross——

Bridg. No; not we—— [*Shewing Oldcastle.*

Old. That’s right—shove me—push me away.

Peter. Go about your business, I say— } *Both show-*

Bridg. Money is the root of all evil. } *ing him.*

Old. As I could wish---that’s right---never spare me——

Peter. We hate you as we do a toad.

Bridg. You vile, ugly thing!

Peter. We can’t endure the sight of you——

Bridg. You midnight owl! you griping, miserly, old——

Old. There, there, hold, hold—but here, says he, here’s the money for you, [*Holding out money.*

Pushing him.

Peter. I humbly thank your honour. [*Takes it.*]

Old. Villain! traitor! [*strikes him.*] Is this your virtue at last?

Peter. La! what's the matter? was not I to take it?

Old. What have I been labouring all this time?

Peter. But you did not shew the money at first.—I could have refused it ever so long, if I had not seen the colour of it.

Old. The way of the world! but you are never to take it—Money is the ruin of the world—it declares war—it patches up a peace—it makes lawyers speak—it makes some folks hold their tongues: go, and think of all this——

Bridg. } [*Going in a hurry.*] Yes, Sir!

Peter.

Old. And remember you have no business with money---Come, and shut the street-door after me.

Bridg.

Peter. } Yes, Sir.

[*They run out.*]

SCENE III.

The Street. Enter LOVIBOND.

Lovi. I must pay a friendly visit to brother Oldcastle—Ha! ha! I know things are going wrong with him—I must gratify my curiosity——

Enter OLDCASTLE.

Old. Brother Lovibond! I go on as I could wish—my family is all as exact as clock-work——

Lovi. I am glad of it, for the last time I met you—

Old. I beg your pardon—but now, loll, toll, loll! I am completely happy!

Enter BRUMPTON.

Brump. My dear old friend, I am glad I have met you—Oh! such plague! such vexation!

Old. Mind him, brother Lovibond; you'll see what order my family is in—— [Aside.

Brump. I was at the house but a little while since, and——

Old. And no admittance, I warrant——

Brump. Oh! the damndest adventure——

Old. A bucket of water upon your head I reckon—
ha! ha!

Brump. Not so bad as that: I got over the garden wall, and—the adventure is whimsical too—the servants immediately conducted me up stairs, and——

Old. Conducted you up stairs!

Lovi. Ha! ha! mind him, brother Biddulph——

Old. [aside to Lovibond] Call me Oldcastle——

Lovi. Come, come, listen to this——

Brump. But, pox take it; my usual good fortune failed me: I was not in the room two minutes when old Stiffump came tottering up: no way for a retreat, I was obliged to skulk in a dark nook, where I was almost stifled. In he came, and the lovely angel immediately accosted him in such a tone of simplicity—

Lovi. Simplicity!---ha! ha!---well---well---let us hear——

Brump. The curmudgeon did not utter a syllable; walked about the room, fetched a deep groan; banged the table with his cane; took her by the arm, and led her away with him——

Loxi. Ha! ha! a narrow escape—brother Biddulph—

Old. Call me Oldcastle, I say.

Loxi. Ha! ha! Simplicity is an admirable preservative of young girls!——Ha! ha! well, young gentleman, and how did all this end?

Brump. His back was no sooner turned, than I stole down stairs, tipt the servant a couple of guineas, and so got clear off.

Loxi. The old gentleman is going on delightfully!—his family is all like clock-work! ha! ha! ha! I have satisfied my curiosity—a good day to you. [*Exit.*]

Old. This is a mortal stroke! Oh! Peter! Peter! Is this his virtue? this his contempt of money? this his bucket of water? [*Exit.*]

Brump. What a crusty old cent. per cent. it is!

Enter BELFORD.

Bel. Brumpton!—Well encountered---I have been in quest of you this hour. This is the very crisis of your fate, man.

Brump. Hey! how! what's the matter?

Bel. A train of gunpowder is laid, and there is Sir Theodore with a lighted match ready to blow you to the moon.

Brump. Explain, my dear boy, explain.

Bel. Why then, in plain English: your father has

hired one of the good women who are skilld in the trade of leading young virgins aside: she, by his directions, is to tempt the mistress of your heart abroad, and then to convey her out of the kingdom, where she will be lost to you for ever.

Brump. 'Sdeath! it shan't be. I'll watch the house day and night. Where's that scoundrel Brisk?

Bel. Poor fellow, it was from him I had this information; he is out of his wits about this business!

Brump. Out of his wits! he is always out of the way. Not a moment to be lost. I'll to my post directly.

Bel. My affairs are in a thriving way——

Brump. I am glad to hear it——

Bel. Success attend you.

[*Exit.*

Brump. Oh! the devil! here's a piece of business!

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Another Street. Enter BRISK, in Woman's Cloaths, with a Bundle under his Arm.

Brik. One push more, and then, Brisk, your toils are over—come, that's the house.——As [my master knows nothing of what I am about, I may have some chance to succeed here.——Now for a few superannuated matron-like airs——[*Knocks at the door.*]——I found out her mantua-maker by good luck, and so now I know my cue——

[*Knocks at the door.*

Enter PETER.

Peter. Did you want any body, pray? No admittance here!

Brisk. Yes, truly, young man——La!——I am so jaded with walking——Oh! such a pain in my side——and my head! it perfectly swims again——I must in and rest a bit——I have brought your young lady's wedding-gown.

Enter BRUMPTON.

Brump. How! is not that she? Oh! the deceitful Machiavel in petticoats!

Peter. Why an you bring home her geers, that alters the case——walk in, Mrs.——— [Exit.

Brisk. Ay! the little lady-bird will be as fine as an angel, I warrant her. [Goes in.

Brump. Oh! the damned decoy-duck, there she goes sure enough. I'll wait for her in the street—'Sdeath! she may get her out at the back-door——I'll alarm the old fellow directly——[Raps loudly.] The old bawd shall be put in the stocks——[Raps again.] Fire! fire! fire! Master Biddulph.

OLDCASTLE in the Balcony.

Old. What's the matter there? Who raps at my door in this——

Brump. Mr. Biddulph! Mr. Biddulph——

Old. What do you want?

Brump. You'll be robbed of your treasure, of all your heart holds dear——Miss Mary Ann will be stole from you——an old bawd will carry her off——she's in your house now, now, now, now.

Old. A bawd in my house! I'll ferret her out, I warrant me——— [*Goes in.*]

Brump. Now, Sir Theodore, what becomes of your intrigue? Bravo, Brumpton! this is well managed,

Enter BRISK, and OLDCASTLE beating him,

Old. Abominable procuress! horrible sorceress!

Brump. [*Beating him.*] Agent of darkness! Minister of iniquity!

Brisk. Nay, good gentlemen———

Old. Vile seducer! Detestable pander!

Brump. Poacher of young game! Kidnapper of innocence!

Brisk. For heaven's sake!———I'm down o' my knees, have a little mercy!

Old. Thou gipsy!—thou witch of Endor!

Brump. Get upon your broomstick, and fly away to Lapland!

Brisk. The devil's in the man, he will spoil all!— [*throwing off his woman's apparel.*] Nay, then, since you go to that—your servant, master!

Brump. Confusion! what have I been doing?

[*Aside.*]

Brisk. You have been in luck as well as I, master!

Old. A footman in petticoats all this time! Thou vile impostor!—thou Newgate-bird! [*Beats him again.*]

Brump. Wounds! Master Oldcastle all this time! nay, then I must pretend—[*Aside.*]—How dare a servant of mine, rascal——[*Beats him.*]

Brisk. Wounds! Sir, it was in your service——

Brump. Who gave you orders, villain? [*Striking.*]

Old. That's right! Who gave you orders?

Brump. By what authority?

Old. Produce your authority!

Brump. To take such liberties with your master.

Brisk. I shall take the liberty to leave him for ever!

[*Runs off.*]

Old. This is delightful! this is charming! The villain will come no more—he has paid the piper!

Brump. A scoundrel, to behave in this manner! Oh, ho, ho! such an incident! [*In a fit of laughing.*] An unlucky dog I am!—Poor Brisk, oh, ho!

Old. Mr. Brumpton!

Brump. Mr. Oldcastle! What, are you Mr. Bidulph all this time?

Old. You see what plague and vexation you was bringing upon your friend——

Brump. My dear Sir, why did you not tell me at first! If I had known that I was all this time trespassing upon your ground——

Old. You see what a scene of iniquity you have been engaged in! But since you perceive your error, I am pacified. This discovery is lucky, it will make an end of all. I'll tell you what, you shall come and explain your mistake to Mary Ann this moment.

Brump. With the utmost pleasure, Sir, and wishing her all happiness, I will bid her farewell for ever.

Old. That will be right—you shall tell her that you repent——that you now renounce all wicked pro-

jects, and are convinced it would be the ruin of her to marry you.

Brump. Lead the way, Sir; I am ready to obey your commands.

Old. Very well! enough said—— [Going.

Brump. One dear interview! Bravo! Brumpton, you're in luck. [Aside.

Old. [Turning about.] What do you say?

Brump. Only that—you'll make a fair report of me to Sir Théodore——

Old. Ay! ay! that I'll do——come along.

Enter MARY ANN, in the Balcony.

Mary. La! there's Mr. Brumpton with him——

Old. You baggage, what do you do there?—Get you in——did not you hear the people cry fire?

Mary. Ay! but they cry so many things in London, I did not mind that——

Old. Get you in, and never be seen in a balcony again!—It was there you saw her first, Mr. Brumpton;—ha! ha!—I'll have it taken down——Come along. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

The House. Enter MARY ANN.

By goles this is pure, he is bringing him to see me. I have writ another letter since he taught me that trick himself! and now I'll give it him if I can.

Enter OLDCASTLE and BRUMPTON.

Old. Mary Ann, I have brought the gentleman with me. He came to ask your pardon, and to tell you that he was going to be the ruin of you. Tell it to her yourself, Mr. Brumpton.

Mary. I am sure I forgive him with all my heart, so I do.

Old. Speak to her, Mr. Brumpton, speak to her.

Brump. Madam, I did not know what liberties I was taking with my friend, and though my conduct was inspired by real love, and your resistless charms—

Old. Pshaw! that's all preamble—to the point at once—you had a mind to ruin her, say so without mincing it—

Brump. I must now renounce all farther pretensions, since to adore you any longer would be a violation of friendship, and an injury to this worthy gentleman, who has been intimate with my father for fifty years—

Old. You may pass that by—

Mary. Ah! he's a false man, and I don't love him.

[Aside.]

Brump. So that I most humbly beg your pardon.

Old. Go on, go on—

[He is seized with a fit of coughing.]

Brump. *[While Oldcastle coughs.]* And though I shall never efface your loved idea from my mind—

[He kisses his hand to her.]

Mary. [*She smiles.*] You have my pardon, I told you so already.

Old. Oh! lord! lord! [*Recovering himself.*] Well, have you told her you have done with her for ever?

Brump. Yes, I have got so far——

Old. Very well! Now, Mary Ann, on your part, let him know your mind.

Mary. Must I say all out of my own head?

Old. Ay! ay! tell him all——I wish brother Lovibond was witness to this! [*Aside.*]

Mary. I am very glad you came to speak to me, Sir, and I understand you very well. [*Smiles to him.*]

Old. But a little more at large——tell him whom you chuse for an husband.

Mary. Why, here are two lovers, for whom I have very different sentiments. I love one of them——
[*Frowning at Oldcastle.*]—and—[*Smiling at Brumpton.*]
I hate the other. The company of one is always agreeable—[*To Oldcastle sullenly.*]—and—[*Smiling at Brumpton.*]——I don't care if I never see the other's face—I should like to be married to one of them——
[*To Oldcastle.*]—and—[*Smiling to Brumpton.*]——I had as soon be gibbeted, as be married to the other. But my own Mr. Oldcastle—[*Toys and plays with him, then turning to Brumpton.*] I love you of all things.

Old. You have won my heart.

Mary. But do you forgive I every thing now? Ah! you don't love me. [*Sings 'Go, Naughty Man,' and reaches a letter to Brumpton.*]

Old. I do, in troth I do—ha! ha! ha! Mr. Brump,

ton, you see I have not suggested a word—all the dictates of her own heart——

Mary. [*Smiling to Brumpton.*] All from the very bottom of my heart!

Brump. Since I understand you, Ma'am, I shall remove the hated object from your sight.

Mary. The sooner the better.

[*Then turns and plays with Oldcastle.*]

Brump. Mr. Oldcastle, I have the honour, Sir, to wish you all happiness.—And I fly this moment to put your commands in execution, Ma'am——[*Going.*]

Mary. You can't go about it too fast.

Brump. You may rely upon my honour.

Mary. And don't let me be unhappy any more.

Brump. You may depend upon me.

Old. So——so——now I'll attend you down. Po! no ceremony. You have made me happy, Mr. Brumpton—you have made Mary Ann happy. Come, I'll let you out, Mr. Brumpton. [*Exit.*]

Brump. [*Kissing his hand to Mary Ann.*] I attend you, Sir. [*Exit.*]

Mary. By goles, he has taught me a little wit himself; and if Mr. Brumpton follows my directions, I shall be pure and happy at last.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lovibond's House. Enter HARRIET and BELFORD.

Harriet.

HUSH! don't speak so loud, you'll give the alarm else to my keepers below stairs, and all is ruin'd—I don't know what to say, Mr. Belford;—my heart begins to fail me——

Bel. But after surmounting every difficulty, now in this last stage of the business to let your spirits sink, would be such a falling off from the character you have supported this day;—a character that surpasses all the heroines in romance, both for spirit and contrivance.

Har. The difficulties I had to encounter roused my spirits for a while, just as fits give us, for the time, more than our natural strength;—but now the conflict's over, my resolution staggers, and I am at full leisure to feel the weakness of my condition—I can't go thro' it, Mr. Belford—I can't indeed!

Bel. Nay, summon up your resolution: our mutual vows, the happiness that waits us, every motive, a thousand things conspire, and call for all the constancy you are mistress of.

Har. But then to break through all the proprieties of conduct—all the decencies which my sex requires—

Bel. In a case like your's, the means are just which save you from destruction.

Har. I tremble for the event—I shan't be able to escape.

Bel. Trust yourself to me, my love—'tis but an easy step out of the window upon the leads, and then through the neighbouring house—the people are in my interest—come, resume your courage—you cannot doubt my honour.

Hur. But the censure of the world—nay, your own opinion of me——

Bel. The world will admire your spirit, and when 'tis known, that the old gentleman was your dupe, and carried on the plot himself, your invention will be applauded every where.

Har. Why, I can almost laugh at him even now—
[Hears Lovibond coming.] Deliver me! what shall I do? undone! detected!

Bel. This is the consequence of delaying too long.

Har. Run into this room;—make haste—dispatch—
[Shuts him in]—and to make safe work——

[Puts the key in her pocket.]

Enter LOVIBOND.

Lovi. Harriet, I am never happy but in your company—the minutes move with leaden feet, when I am out of your presence.

Har. And yet, you ill-natured man!—you can contrive to be out more than half the day.

Lovi. Chide me not;—you'll break my heart if you do—every frown on that face is a death-warrant, and

every smile is benefit of clergy—come, come, brighten up into happiness and love.

Har. You know your power over me—you can do what you please with your own Harriet!

Lovi. Can I? you are too good.

Har. Where have you been all this time?

Lovi. I have been—but you look pale—what is the matter?

Har. Occasioned by fretting at your absence—and that hideous man keeps me in a constant alarm.

Lovi. Don't waste a thought on him—he'll trouble you no more—though, to do him justice, I believe his intentions were honourable—poor devil! ha! ha! I fancy he loves you dearly—Well! but—poor brother Oldcastle!—your sister has so bamboozled him—

Har. My sister!

Lovi. She has admitted a young gentleman to visit her—

Har. She could not be so wicked!

Lovi. The girl has not erred so much from an evil disposition, as from ignorance.

Har. A very small share of sense, Mr. Lovibond, will give sufficient intimations of our duty.

Lovi. Very true—now the like of you would not have done such a thing for the world!—

Har. Not to be empress of the universe—The young men of this age are such a profligate race.

Lovi. You are fit to instruct grey hairs—the young gentleman—one Mr. Brumpton—a wild, fiery young

spark—he was in the very house with her, and she hid him in the closet—ha! ha!

Har. In the closet! well! after that, I will never own her for my sister!—the wicked girl! I am glad I have not visited her——

Loxi. Ha! ha! ha!—poor man!—he never suspected any thing—had it been my case, I should have smoked it in a moment——

Har. Without doubt! there is no imposing upon you——

Loxi. Oh! no—no such thing——ha! ha! I can see through a millstone—the eye of an eagle for a plot! But come—come—it begins to grow late—come, let me hand you to your chamber, and then I'll lock you in safe from all harm till morning.

Har. Heavens! what shall I do now?—[*Aside.*] Hush! let me say a word to you first—don't speak loud. My sister is indeed much worse than you can conceive—I wish you would step and bring Mr. Oldcastle hither directly.

Loxi. Now! what occasion can there be——

Har. She lovethat Mr. Brumpton to distraction, and has actually made her escape; to follow the vile man.

Loxi. Made her escape!

Har. She is in that room now—I have locked her in—such wicked schemes as she has in her head! She has told me all, and intends to marry this Mr. Brumpton: she has found out that she is of age, and says she will be made a fool of no longer!—there's a spirit for you!——

Loxi. A spirit indeed!

Har. But I have secured her, to prevent the disgrace, to ward off the ruin——and——

Loxi. That was considerate of you—let me go and talk to the young vixen.

Har. No—no—that will spoil all—I have pretended to connive at all this——But the most prudent step—I have learned all my prudence, you know, from you——

Loxi. Ay! an apt scholar you have been!

Har. You are very good—but there is no time to be lost—I would have you bring Mr. Oldcastle here directly, that he may find her in the very fact.

Loxi. Very good!—and then I shall be able to do the poor man a service, and make a jest of him into the bargain!—Keep her safe;—don't let her out—this will so torment him!—ha! ha! [Exit.]

Har. I am glad my sister has found a lover, and hope she'll marry him with all my heart.——Is he gone? [Listens at the door.] Ay! I hear him lock the street-door after him—and now I'll venture to unlock this door.

Enter BELFORD.

Bel. Thou charming contriver!

Har. Oh!—this new danger has given fresh vigour to my spirits.

Bel. And now, my angel, we'll make sure of our happiness—come, trust yourself to my care——

Har. And yet——

Bel. Nay—no more doubts——our passage to the next house is without difficulty, and then liberty is ours. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Street. Enter LOVIBOND.

Lovi. I never was better pleased in all my life—I burn with impatience to see him—ha! ha! I shall never be able to walk fast enough—ha! ha! ha!——

Enter OLDCASTLE.

Lovi. Well met! I wanted to see you.

Old. Oh! I am now the happiest man on earth. My troubles with young Brumpton are all at an end, and Mary Ann is safe at home.

Lovi. Ay! as he thinks, poor man!——ha! ha!

[*Aside.*]

Old. You may laugh, but I shall like to see your plan succeed as well——what a dupe you will prove at last!——

Lovi. What a dupe you are now!——the bird is flown, man; Mary Ann has eloped——

Old. Ha! ha! ha! you make me laugh.

Lovi. How secure he is! ha! ha! he little dreams——I tell you she is gone——

Old. Always absurd! [*Going out.*]

Lovi. [Following him.] You are ruined, I tell you.

Old. Ha! ha!——do you think I don't know better——

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter HARRIET *and* BELFORD.

Bel. Don't alarm yourself, my angel——this is my house—— *[Knocks at the door,*

Har. Oh! I shall certainly faint——

Enter BRUMPTON.

Brump. My dear Belford——

Har. Heavens! what's the matter?

Brump. Don't be frightened, Ma'am——

Bel. No——this is a friend of mine——well! Brumpton, the business?

Brump. My dearest Belford, this is the most critical moment of my life—I have bribed the servants——carried her off——she is mine——mine for ever——will you give me a room in your house for this one night?

Bel. Why this ceremony? you know you may command in my house——

Re-enter OLDCASTLE *and* LOVIBOND.

Old. What noise is that?

Lowi. That's Brumpton—I know his voice——

Har. I am frightened to death!

Brump. The door opens, walk in, Ma'am, walk in.

[Harriet goes in.

Bel. Light the lady up stairs!

Old. Hush! Let us hear him.

Brump. I am wild with love, with rapture, and success;——I have carried her fairly off, in triumph, my dear boy! She was locked up in a closet, but I broke open the door——

Bel. I give you joy—but my own happiness calls—
bring the lady as soon as you will. [Exit.]

Brump. A thousand thanks, my dear Belford—Vic-
toria! the prize is mine. [Exit.]

Loxi. Are you convinced now?

Old. I am thunderstruck—Robbery! Murder! I'll
break open the door—Watchman, call a justice of
peace—call Sir Theodore Brumpton—he lives just
by—Mr. Oldcastle wants him—his son has robbed
me—I'll alarm all the world! [Raps at the door.]
Robbery! shipwreck! destruction! ruin!

Loxi. Ha! ha!—he feels it now, and I am not sorry
for him——ha! ha!

Old. I am mad—I shall go distracted;—I shall
end my days in Bedlam—[Enter a Servant.] I would
fain speak a word here in the house.

Ser. Sir, my master is somewhat busy, and—

Old. I am plundered—I must go in—oh! villain!
villain! [Rushes in.]

Loxi. Ha! ha!—now will he see which can train
up a young girl best. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

An Apartment in Belford's House. Enter BELFORD.

What's all this noise! [Listens at the door.] Ay! I
hear his voice. How could my booby let him in? But
I have lodged her safe, and this sword shall maintain
possession.

Enter OLDCASTLE and LOVIBOND.

Old. Where is she?—Where is the unfortunate? Restore her directly! restore her to her two guardians! We come to demand her of you.

Lovi. Yes, we demand her, Sir. We know she is here, and therefore——

Bel. My house is my castle, gentlemen; and nobody must offer——

Old. I'll search your house: I'll get a general warrant. She is an heiress, a ward of the High Court of Chancery. 'Tis a contempt: you'll be committed for it. She is our property, in law and equity. I claim her, I demand her, and I will have her.

Bel. This is an unseasonable hour, gentlemen: to-morrow I shall be ready to answer your complaints. In the mean time, I must beg you will leave me in quiet possession of my own house.

Lovi. But we are her guardians, Sir: both her guardians. The girl is under age!

Bel. Mr. Lovibond, you are her guardian; and what then, Sir? Both of ye scandalous betrayers of your trust. I know it all—each circumstance. You would impose upon her tender years, that you may infamously plunder that property which was confided to your care!

Lovi. [*Aside.*] There is a cloud gathering!—We shall both be brought to a strict account. I had better make up this matter, that I may enjoy my own Harriet in security.

Old. You have run away with an heiress, and by the law of the land——

Bel. I have a right to her. I know she is of age, Sir, and it is my fixed resolution to marry her; she has declared in my favour, and nothing shall be a bar to my happiness!

Old. [*To Lovibond.*] She is of age sure enough; how did he find that out? [*Aside.*]

Lovi. Better make the best of a bad bargain.——
[*Aside.*]—But let me understand you, Mr. Belford—do you intend to marry her yourself?

Bel. It is my peremptory resolution. But all in honour, Sir—marriage articles, for the purpose of settling her whole fortune upon herself, are now drawing in the next room.

Lovi. I see what course I must take. If he marries her, I shall live in peace.—[*Aside.*]—Mr. Oldcastle, the girl is of full age. Let me say a word in your ear.

[*Aside to him.*]—Consent to the marriage, and get a handsome allowance for the trouble and expence of her education—That word makes me laugh—ha! ha! ha!

Old. I am distracted; what shall I do?—[*Aside.*]—I thought young Brumpton was to marry her?

Bel. No Brumpton on earth shall rob me of her!

Old. The trouble and the fondness with which we have reared her——

Lovi. He will allow for that.

Old. I have long lov'd her: can't you resign her now—you will be the death of me else?

Lovi. Think no more of her: she is not worthy of

your regard. Mr. Belford will behave like a gentleman in matters of account, and——

Bel. Prescribe your terms: I am ready to agree the matter this moment—

Old. A release for the interest of rents and profits: a cool five thousand for extraordinary trouble, and for her music-master and her dancing-master---

Levi. He was her only master himself!—ha! ha!

[*Aside.*

Bel. Agreed!

Levi. Close with him---close with him directly---

Old. I wish you would resign her to me---

Bel. I will not defer my happiness beyond to-morrow morning! My lawyer is in the next room; let him draw up a memorandum between us, and your conditions are granted.

Levi. It shall be done: we will both sign—Come, don't hesitate.

[*To Oldcastle.*

Old. I shall break my heart!--

Levi. Po! no hesitating!--come and finish the business!

Old. It is a terrible stroke!

Levi. Never stand debating---you have made the best of a bad bargain---lose no time---

[*Forcing him along.*

Old. But, Mr. Belford——

Levi. We must resign her---we must give her up--Come along, man.

[*Forces him out.*

Bel. I attend you, gentlemen---I agree to your proposals.

[*Following them.*

Enter BRUMPTON, and MARY ANN.

Brump. Walk in, my angel; you are secure here.

Bel. Ha! Brumpton, I give you joy—I congratulate you too, Ma'am; and——

Mary. I thank you kindly, Sir.

Brump. And now, Belford, through the perils of this day we have both at last attained our utmost wishes. I could be merry about it, but I must give my fellow Brisk some directions. I have such a story to tell you—ha! ha!—I shall be with you in an instant.

[Exit.

Mary. La! what a pretty room here is!

Bel. Your appearance tells me, Ma'am, that my friend Brumpton has found a treasure.

Mary. I am sure, I am fortunate in finding him; for I led such a life! you can't think how dismal!--

Bel. The scene will now be changed, and the pleasures of life will court you on every side.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

Old. Oh! the little compound of treachery and fraud! *[Aside, and listening.*

Mary. I was kept from morning to night mewed up at home, and he talked such a parcel of bugbears to frighten a body——

Old. Oh the traitress!

Mary. And he said if I looked at a sweet-smiling young gentleman, that I should be murdered, and devoured, and swallowed up!

Bel. An old blockhead!

Mary. Yes, I thought as much---But I am sure I am obliged to Peter and Bridget for letting me out, and they shall come and live with me, so they shall. Do you know our Peter and Bridget?-----

Old. They shall both be hanged.

[*Aside.*

Mary. And my old guardian wanted to marry me himself, but---[*laughs.*]---he talked in such a manner, and said such strange things---But---[*laughs.*]---the joke was, he taught me how to write letters, and I should never have thought of such a thing, had he not put me in the head on't---And he is so old, and totters about so; and he calls me his lambkin; and bids me read the marriage-act, and a heap of trumpery. An hideous, ugly, old scare-crow!—La! there he is!

[*She is disconcerted.*

Old. I have signed, Mr. Belford, and they wait for you.

Bel. I shall give you no delay, Sir.

[*Exit.*

Old. Thou serpent, whom I have warmed and cherished in my bosom! you must sting your benefactor at last, must you? Did not I promise to marry you?

Mary. Yes, but by goles, I thank you for that tho'---

Old. And will you desert me for a stranger?

Mary. [*she laughs.*] He's a sweet man!

Old. Viper! this is your simplicity, is it? I, who loved you so-----

Mary. Ah! but his love is more agreeable by half.

Enter LOVIBOND and BELFORD.

Lovi. Well! now every thing is settled. So, Ma-

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dam, you are there, are you? ha! ha! brother Oldcastle, I always told you how this would end--ha! ha! ha!

Old. If she had minded my instructions!--

Lovi. Ha! ha! instructions!--You brought it all upon yourself--but 'tis better as it is--your head would have ached all the rest of your days--ha! ha! ha!--I am heartily glad of this--ha! ha!--Come, Mr. Belford, I'll give her away--here, take your wife--

Old. Wounds! I can't stand this--I'll not be a witness. [Goes out.]

Lovi. But you shall be a witness; you are a party concerned--you must come back. [Exit after him.]

Bel. Since they have agreed the matter, Harriet shall make her appearance. [Exit.]

Mary. [alone.] What does all this mean?--Sure it can't be sister Harriet he talks of!

Lovi. [without.] You must, you shall come back.

Enter BELFORD, leading in HARRIET.

Bel. Don't be frightened--you are the object of my heart, and they will give you away.

Lovi. [forcing in Oldcastle, without looking behind him.] You are a party to the agreement--you must see her given away.

Bel. Here's the lady. [Leading her to Lovibond.]

Lovi. Ay! ay! give me her hand--[without seeing her.]--you shall see the business done, Mr. Oldcastle. Here, here--wounds! what's all this?--Harriet!

Old. Huzza!--a reprieve!

Mary. Ah! sister there—what, have you been writing letters too? [*Coes up to her.*] I be glad to see you—

Lowi. What does all this mean?—what brought you hither, Madam?

Har. My love for this gentleman.

[*She takes Belford by the hand.*]

Old. Ha! ha! ha!—she is his wife all this time—

Har. I was not by any means worthy of you, Sir—and so I have transferred my affections where I think they will be placed to advantage!—

Lowi. I am ready to sink into the ground with amazement!

Old. Loll, toll, loll!—brother Lovibond!—you brought it all upon yourself—ha! ha! ha!—I pity and laugh at you—ha! ha! ha! this is the education you have given her—ha! ha!

Lowi. I shall die upon the spot—

Old. Ha! ha!—I saw what it would all end in—
[*follows him about.*] She would have been too young a wife for you, man—ha! ha!—I am heartily glad of it—here, here, I'll give her away—here, Mr. Belford, take your wife—

Bel. I accept her at your hand—

Har. And I give you mine with all my heart!

Old. Now, who understands education?—Come, Madam, come you home with me—

[*Taking hold of Mary Ann.*]

Mary. Ah! but I can't do that, for I be married as well as you, sister—[*runs over to her.*] He carried me to a parson, and it was, for all the world, like what

you used to say [*to Oldcastle*] about love, honour, and obey—

Old. What do I hear?

Enter BRUMPTON.

Brump. Oh! ho! ho!—what a day of adventures have I had! but fortune has at last crowned me with success—My good genius has attended me throughout—my sweet, my lovely bride!

Old. Oh! Mr. Brumpton!—what a life you have led me!

Enter Sir THEODORE and BRISK.

Sir Theo. Where is the graceless, the profligate, the abandoned?—So, Sir! [*to Brumpton*] why am I to be called out of my house on account of your midnight practices?

Old. Oh! Sir Theodore, I am glad you are come—your son will be the death of me!—

Sir Theo. What does all this mean, Sir?

Brump. That I am married to this lady, Sir—

Old. He has robbed me of her;—plundered me;—he will go to the gallows for it—she is an heiress!

Loxi. Well! this is some comfort—ha!—ha! brother Oldcastle, we are both in the same predicament.

Sir Theo. An heiress, say you?—George, give me your hand, since you have not thrown yourself away—and was it your ward all this time?

Brump. Yes, Sir—ha! ha! ha!—this is the lady whom he called a milliner's 'prentice—ha! ha!

Sir Theo. Ha! ha!—and that was his fetch to deceive me, was it?—ha! ha!

Levi. Ha! ha!—you have managed it charmingly—ha! ha!

Levi. You'll drive me mad all of you——

Brump.

Sir Theo. } Ha! ha! ha! [All laugh heartily.

Levi.

Mary. This is pure comical——

Old. Oh! I shall never survive this!

Sir Theo. Nay, no uneasiness, Mr. Oldcastle.

Brisk. I fancy we need not think any more of Hampshire now, Sir Theodore!——

Sir Theo. What are you there, Brisk?——You have been a sad rogue.

Brisk. I have been working for the good of your family, Sir!——

Sir Theo. So you have; I forgive you all—George, I give you joy with all my heart.

Brump. You see, Sir, I have married a fortune for the good of my children; and the lady's beauty, I fancy, won't offend you.

Sir Theo. No, I embrace her as my daughter.

Mary. Ah! you are very good, Sir——

Sir Theo. Come, Mr. Oldcastle, never be dejected.—

Old. Oh! I have lost a treasure——

Brump. Yet you must excuse me, Sir, when you recollect the letter the lady flung me out of the window!——

Levi. Flung him a letter!—ha! ha!

Brumf. And when you reflect, that you yourself brought me into her presence to receive this letter, in which she prays me to be her deliverer!—

[Gives him the letter.]

Lovi. Ha! ha! the contriver of his own misfortunes!—Gave her the opportunity himself!—ha! ha!

Ecl. And when you consider, Mr. Lovibond, that you brought me Harriet's messages, and delivered me this letter with your own hand!—

Lovi. How is this?— *[Reading it to himself.]*

Har. A declaration of my heart—I had nobody to carry it but you!

Old. The contriver of his own ruin!—delivered her letter himself! ha! ha!—how well he knows the world!

Brumf. Belford, give me your hand—and so we have been struggling hard for two sisters all this time!—

Bel. We have, and from henceforth shall live both friends and brothers.

Old. Oh! Mary Ann!--you have deceived me, but I shall be glad to see you happy.

Mary. And I am sure, I shall be always glad to see you, if you live these three years to come—Here's your marriage act for you!—Sister Harriet, la! I longed like any thing to see you—and I am glad we are both happy at last—

Brumf. A right use made of this event, will be of general service to us all---To these gentlemen it may prove a School for Guardians, where they will learn not to bring upon themselves the reproach of a disho-

nest, an amorous, and contemptible old age!--We, Belford, and these ladies, who are now embarked on a voyage for life,---we cannot fail of happiness---

*To youth sure rapture marriage ever brings,
When from esteem the happy union springs.*



EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MISS ELLIOT.

LADIES, your servant—servant, gentlemen all—
The same good folks to you—both great and small :
Here's Mary Ann again :—but that an't fair,
To jeer a simple girl you might forbear.
Who knows, since married,—though you laugh and gaze,
But Mary Ann may learn your London ways ?
May ape your fashions, since you've shewn her how,
And drop the mask at once—as I do now.

Thus you behold,—whatever the condition,
To new extremes how easy the transition.
'Tis so through life :—to town from country fairs
The clown comes up, and gapes, and laughs, and stares !
Give him a liv'ry,—whims unknown before !
He learns his master's follies to do o'er ;
He drinks, turns coxcomb, and betts five to four. }

Pray, may I, ladies, touch your modish life,
And shew good sense and fashion there at strife ?
“ Oh ! do Miss Elliot,” says a prude with spite,
“ Pull 'em to pieces ; bring their faults to light ;
Pulling to pieces is my dear delight.” }
Why then each fair one seems a diff'rent creature
From what she's meant, and travesties her nature.

Proud of defects, Flirtilla swims along,
Politely weak, and elegantly wrong :

Through the gay round of time her only care
To fix the patch, and guide a straggling hair.

Lady, Camilla, form'd to seize the rein,
To rival John, and smack along the plain;
In London sickens with dissembled airs,
And "help me—help me up these odious stairs!"

Nature's best gifts we all with pride disclaim;
We lisp, we totter, deaf, and blind, and lame.
The tongue indeed we women ne'er confine;
—Scandal's too dear a pleasure to resign!
Scandal, and cards, tea, mirth, and spleen, a ball,
Comus!—the monkey too!—and there's the life of all:
A life of whim!—till from the faded eye,
And wither'd form, the trembling graces fly.

There's a true picture!—how do ye like it, ladies?
How is the light? and how do ye think the shade is?
A copy hence our simple girl may make;
Unless she should this wiser counsel take—
Be rul'd by reason for your beauty's sake.
Reason still gives to radiant eyes their grace,
Warren's imperial milk—for ev'ry face.
Beauty, ye fair, may forge the lower's chain;
But the mind's charms your empire must maintain.





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